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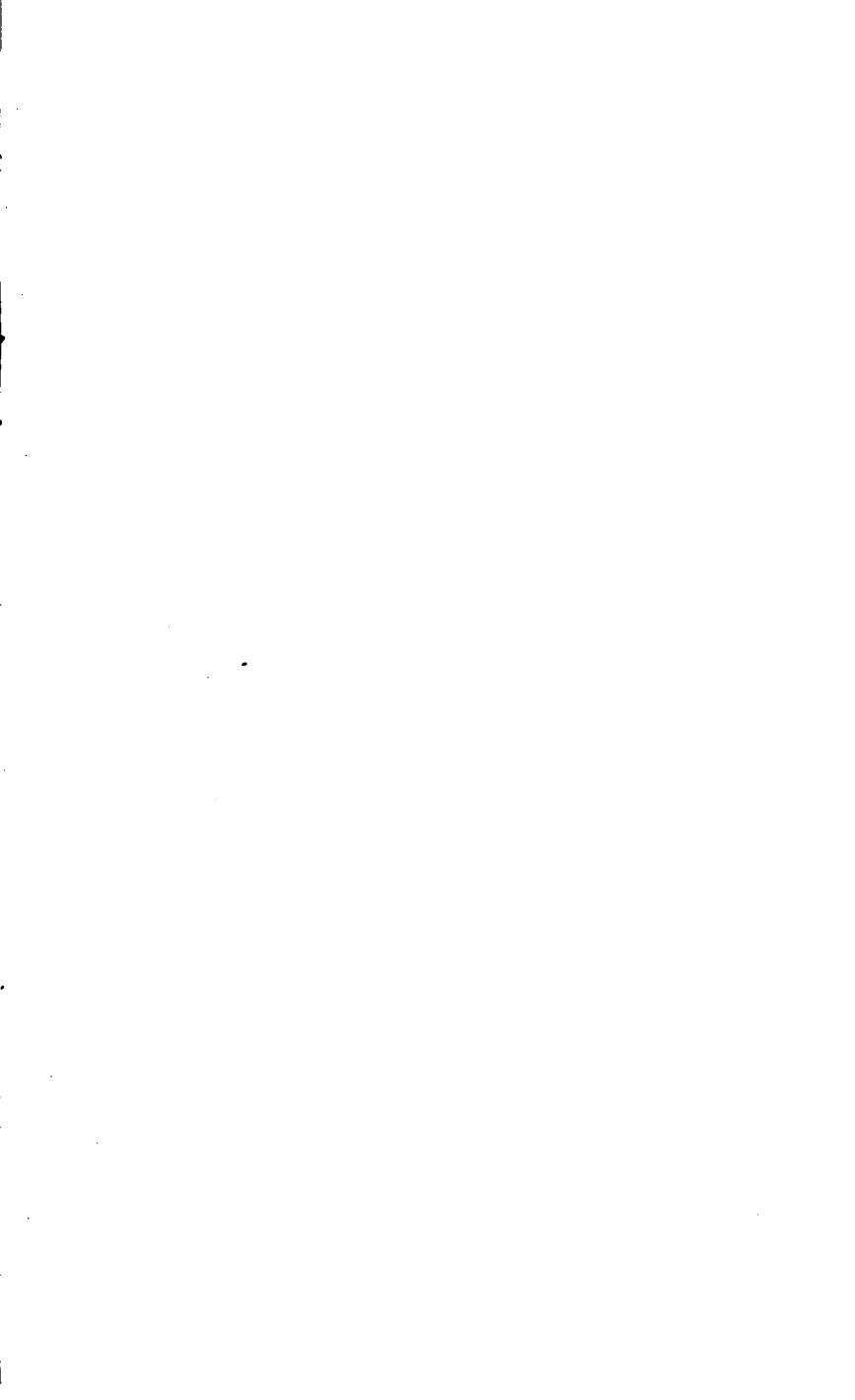
THE IDLE MAN

[ No 5 ]  
Volume 1

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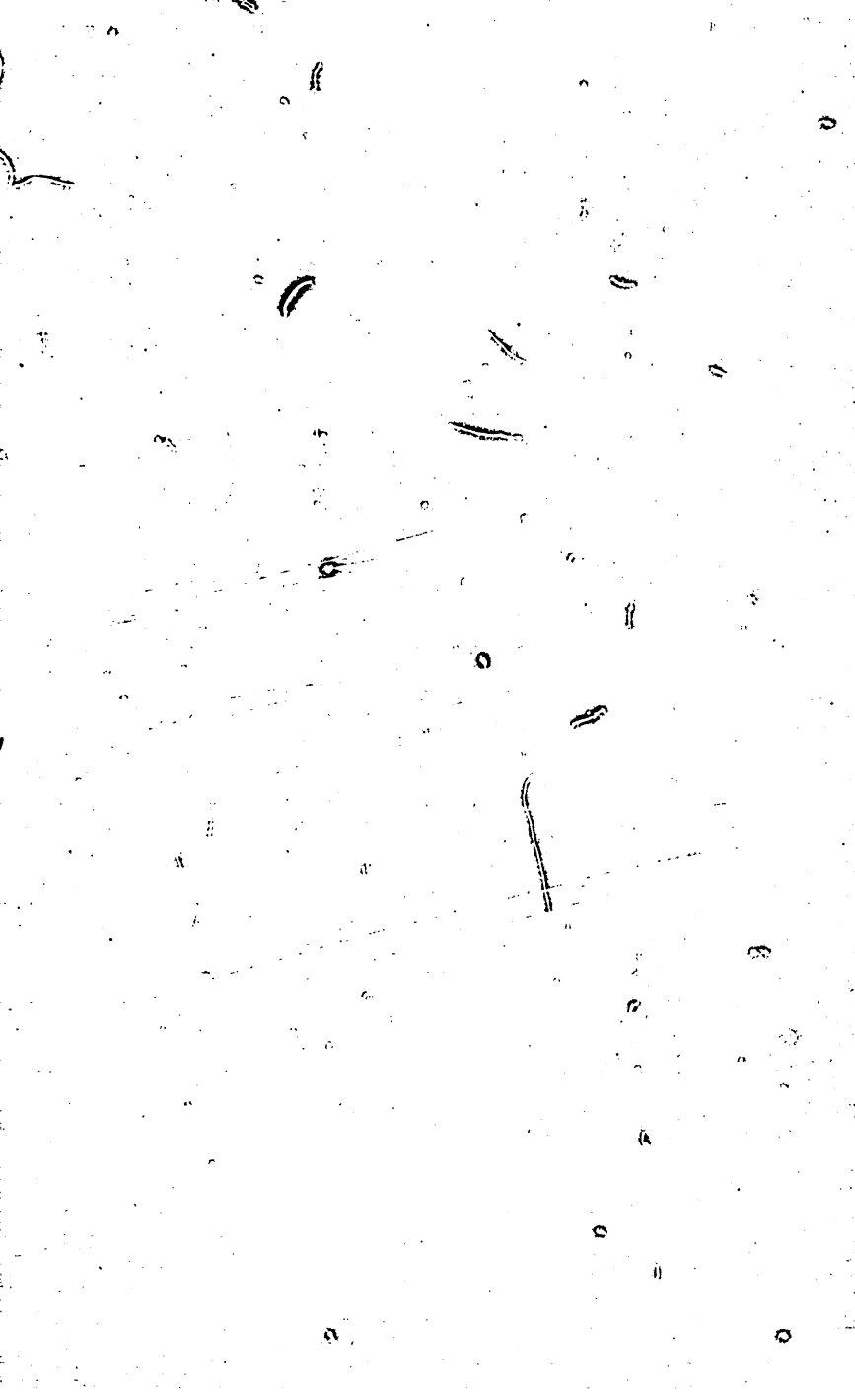
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# IDLE MAN.

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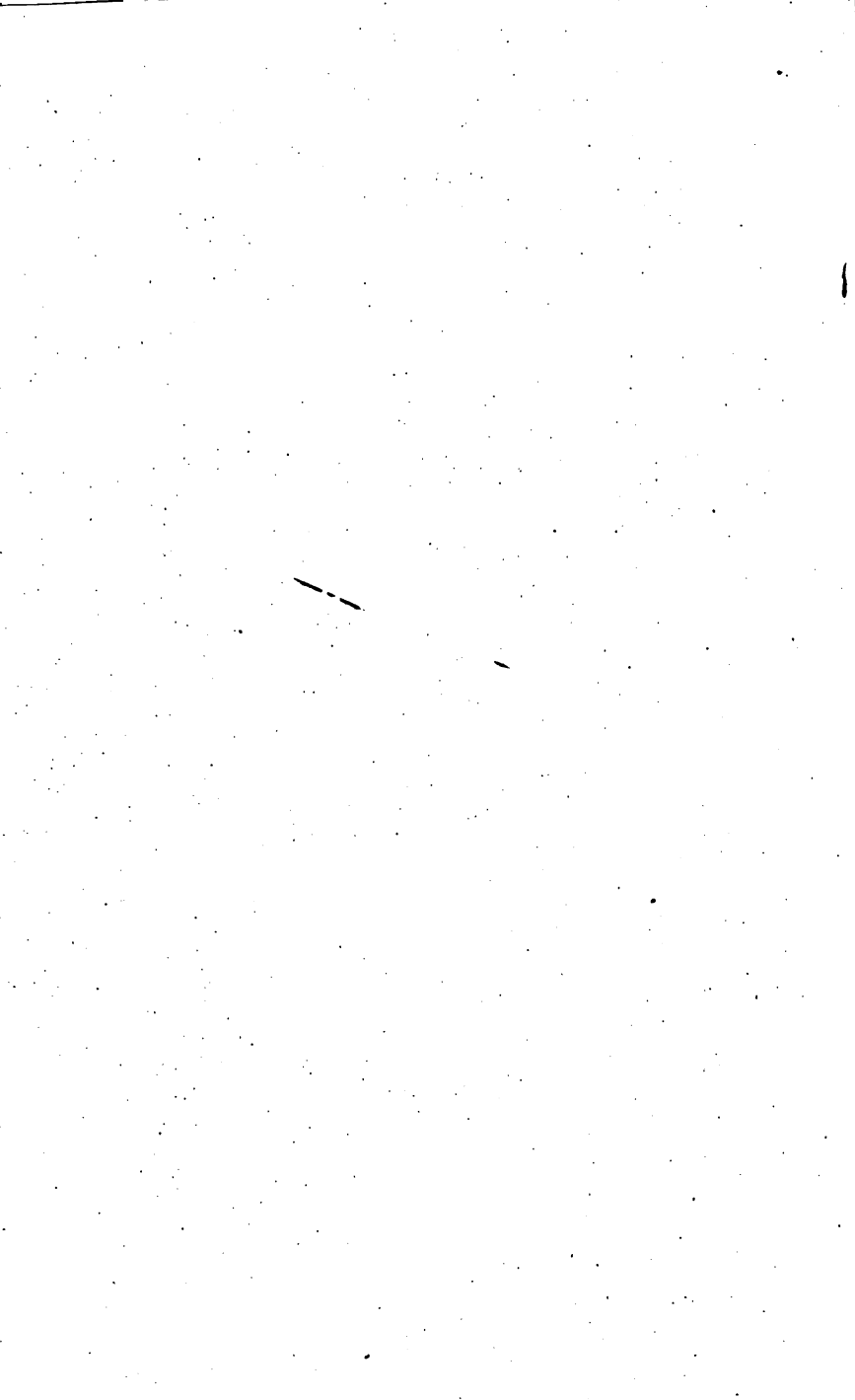
How various his employments, whom the world  
Calls idle, *Couper.*

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NEW-YORK:  
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1821-2.



# THOMAS THORNTON.

—and prudent counsels fled ;  
And bounteous Fancy, for his glowing mind,  
Wrought various scenes, and all of glorious kind.  
*Craik.*

—Remove  
—deflated pride,  
Prosperity subverted, maddening want,  
Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,  
Love with despair, or grief in agony.  
*Wordsworth.*

Or to the restless sea and roaring wind,  
Gave the strong yearnings of a ruin'd mind.  
*Craik.*

“WHY, Mr. Thornton, are you dreaming?” said Mrs. Thornton, trying to appear easy, and dropping in her lap her work, which she had not set a stitch to for the last half hour.—“I can’t see to thread my needle, for the wick has run up, till it looks like a very cock’s comb, and the fire has got so low, that I hardly feel the end of my fingers. It’s exceedingly chilly about the room—pray give me my shawl, or I shall perish.”

“Do as other wise people do, my dear,—look back a little, and you’ll find your shawl on the bars of your chair. As to the candle, I’ll see to

that ; and if I could take the coxcomb from our Tom's head as easily, it would be equally well for your sight."

"Ha! ha! Now, Mr. Thornton, you shouldn't try to be witty when you're vexed. You don't know what bungling work angry folks make at humour."

"True, my dear,—much the same as fond ones at government."

Mr. Thornton took his feet down from the side of the fire-place, put his spectacles on his nose, at the same time looking sharply through them, with both his gray eyebrows thrown into double arches.

"Upon my word, Mr. Thornton, I'm glad you're at home again ; for you sat there playing your spectacles between your fingers, with nothing but a gruff hum, now and then, as if you were miles off in the woods, and contriving how to clear your wild lands."

"I've enough growing wild at my own door to see to, without taking to the woods, and harder to bring into order, than any soil my trees grow upon, however stubborn."

Mrs. Thornton saw that she could not rid herself of the difficulty by laughing. She

coloured and remained silent. She was conscious of being too indulgent to her son; and might, perhaps, have been brought to a wiser course towards him, had not her husband's impatience of her weakness, and vehement opposition to her folly, and a consequent harshness in his bearing towards Tom, created a kind of party feeling within her, which, with a common sort of sophistry, she resolved wholly into pity for her child. This was a bad situation for the boy, for the weakness of his mother's conduct was easily perceived by him, and looked upon with a little of contempt, at the same time that it made for his convenience; while his father's sternness, which kept him in check, and which he would gladly have been rid of, commanded his respect. This led him to like what was agreeable, rather than what was right, and to lose all distinction of principle in self-gratification. And though all selfishness hardens the heart, there is nothing which turns it so soon to stone, as a contempt for those who love us, and are fondly, though unwisely, contributing to our pleasures. To hate our enemies is not so bad as to despise our friends. The cold, hard triumph of prosperity is a worse sin than that

which eats into us in the rancour of adversity ; and it is more deceptive too ; for good fortune has something joyous in it, even to the morose, who oftentimes mistake their gladness for a general good will, and play with the miseries of some, to make others laugh.

Even vehement and inconsiderate tempers, who take fire as quick in another's cause as in their own, lose their generosity, where too much is ministered to their will ; and what was only a warm resentment of another's wrong, may come to be nothing else, but a feeling of power and a love of victory.

Mr. Thornton saw the confused expression in his wife's face, and his sharp, sudden look relaxed into one of mild and melancholy reproach, while she sat pricking her finger, as she tried to seem to be intently hurrying on her work. He pulled out his watch, and continued looking at it some time, taking an uneasy kind of delight in seeing the minute hand go forward, and wishing it later.

"It is not very late, I hope, Mr. Thornton."

"O, no,—but a little past twelve—a very reasonable hour for a boy to be out—and at a cockfight, too."

"But, Mr. Thornton, had you heard how earnestly he importuned me, you would not wonder I gave him leave. He promised to return early. But boys, you know, never think of time when about their amusements."

"It is not of much consequence that they should, when their amusements are so humane and innocent. A cockpit must be an excellent school for a lad of Tom's mild disposition."

Some couples have particular points of union, but more have those of disagreement; and from the frequency with which both return to their several kinds, it would be hard to tell which afford the most pleasure.

There was but one subject on which Mr. and Mrs. Thornton were at odds with each other, but to make up for the want of more, it was one of very frequent occurrence; and had not Tom suddenly made his appearance, there is no knowing how far the bitter taunting of the old gentleman would have gone at this time.

Tom entered the room, his crisped, black hair off his forehead, his swarthy complexion flushed with excitement from the desperate conflict he had just witnessed; his mouth firmly set, his nostrils expanded, and his eye fiery and



dilated. He had a strong cast of features, the muscles of his face always working, and his movements hasty, impetuous, and threatening. His countenance was open and manly, and it seemed to depend upon the turn of circumstances whether he was to make a good, or a bad man. He was surprised, and a little abashed for a moment, at finding his father up. He looked at his mother, as if to say she had betrayed him; and his mother looked at him, as if to upbraid him for breaking his word by staying so late, and thus bringing his father's displeasure upon both.

"I suppose that I may go to bed now, as you have seen fit to return home at last, my young gentleman? And did you bet on the winning cock, or are you to draw on me to pay off your debt of honour?"

"I betted no higher than I had money to pay;" answered Tom, proudly: "and I care not if I go with an empty pocket for a month to come," (his face brightening) "for he was a right gallant fellow I lost upon."

Angry as his father was, the careless generosity of Tom's manner touched his pride.—  
"You are malapert. But this comes of late

hours, and dissipation. We'll have no more of it. Get you to bed, Sir; and look to it that you do not gaff the old rooster,—I'll have no blood spilt on my grounds."

"Never without your leave, Sir," said Tom, in a humble tone, his mouth drawing into a smile at his father's ignorance. And glad to be let off so easily, he went to bed, laughing at the thoughts of their old dunghill, blind of one eye, dying game. "They must have been but simple lads in my father's day," said Tom to himself, as he blew out his candle, and threw himself into bed to dream over the fight.

"Tom is not so bad a boy, neither," said Mr. Thornton, putting the fender before the fire, and preparing to go to bed. "And I see not why he shouldn't make a proper man enough, were there no one to take all the pains in the world to spoil him."

In a few minutes all was quiet in the house.

Tom had now reached that age, in which it is pretty well determined whether the passions are to be our masters or servants. He had never thought for a moment of checking his; and if they were less violent at one time than another, it was because he was swayed for the

instant by some gentler impulse, and not that he was restrained by principle. His father's late mild treatment of him seemed to have a softening effect upon his disposition, and for a few days he appeared perfectly at rest and free from starts of passion. But some little incidents soon brought back his father's severity of manner, and this the son's spirit of opposition; and the mother's weakness was a constant temptation to his love of power. Every day occasioned a fresh difficulty. Tom decided all the disputes in the school, it mattered little with him whether by force or persuasion. And as he feared no one living, and generally sided with the weakest, partly from a love of displaying his daring and prowess, and partly from a hatred of all tyranny but his own, he frequently came home with his clothes torn and face bloody and bruised. This, however, might be said for Tom, he was always the favourite of the smaller boys. He cared not to oppress, where it showed neither courage nor skill. His poor mother was filled with constant trembling and alarm for him. This was an amusement to him; and, from the most violent rage after one of these contests, he often broke out into a loud laugh at

the plaintive sound of his mother's lament over him. Amongst Tom's other accomplishments, he was a great *whip*. So without saying a word to any one, he contrived, with the assistance of a schoolfellow as wild as himself, to put a young, fiery horse, which his father had just purchased, to a new gig. The horse was restiff—Tom grew angry and beat him—his companion was thrown out, and broke his arm; but Tom, with the usual success of the active and daring, cleared himself unhurt. The carriage, however, was dashed to pieces, and his father's fine horse ruined.

Not long after this, and before his father's anger had time to cool, Tom, with some of his play-mates, was concerned in breaking the windows of a miserly neighbour, that they might make him loosen his purse strings for once. One of the smallest boys was detected, and upon refusing to give information of the rest, the master began flogging him severely. Tom would have taken the whipping himself, but he knew this would not save the lad, unless he made the others known; besides, he had an utter detestation of mean and cowardly acts, and could not brook that the little fellow should be punished for not turning traitor. Tom sprung

upon his seat, and crying out, "a rescue!" was followed by the other boys, and in an instant the master was brought to the floor. Lying upon one's back is not a favourable posture for dignity—certainly not in a schoolmaster. Though a good deal intimidated, the master frowned and threatened; but Tom was not to be frightened at words and looks. Indeed the ludicrous situation of his instructor, the novelty of it, and his mock authority, put Tom into such a fit of laughter, that he could hardly give his conditions of release. There was nothing but shouting and uproar through the school. And it was not till a promise of full pardon to all concerned, that the master was allowed to rise.

Tom knew that this would end his school-boy days, and so far, he was not sorry for what had happened; for he longed to be free and abroad amidst the adventures of the world. "Let it all go," said he, walking forward with a full swing; "if I have been wild and headstrong, I have not wasted my time. And I'll so better my instruction, that I will one day be amongst men, what I have been amongst boys. And who will then dare say, nay, to Tom Thornton?"

As he came in sight of the house, he slackened his pace; and forgetting his distant views of power, began to consider how he should meet his father.

“It will be all out in less than four and twenty hours. I had better then have the merit of telling it myself. This will go some ways towards my pardon; for the old man, with all his severity, likes openness,—it has saved me many a whipping, when I was younger. So, thou almost only virtue I possess, let me make the most of thee while thou stick-est by me.”

He was, indeed, a forthright lad, not because he considered openness a virtue, but because it agreed with the vehemence and daring of his character, and gratified his pride.

With all his self reliance, his heart beat quick as he drew near the door. He thought of his father's strict notions of government, his own numerous offences of late, the sternness and quickness of his father's temper, and the violence and obstinacy of his own; and he could not but dread the consequences of the meeting.

“Why should I stand like a coward, arguing the matter with myself, when I know well

enough that there is but one way of acting? The sooner begun, the sooner over, and the worst has an end."

So saying, he threw open the door, and went directly to his father's room. Mr. Thornton was not there. He passed hastily from one room to another, as in pursuit of some one who was trying to escape him, and inquiring quickly of every body he met, for his father. He at last went to his mother's chamber, and knocking, but scarcely waiting for an answer, entered it and asked abruptly, "where is he?"

"Who, my dear?"

"Dear me no dears, I'm not in a humour for it. Where's my father?"

"Your father, child! He's gone to the village. But what's the matter? Something dreadful, I'm sure. O, Thomas, you make my life miserable."

"Humph!" said Tom, after a pause, and drawing his lips close together. "Gone to the village! Then every old woman in it has blabbed it over and over again in his ears long ago, and with a thousand lies tacked to it, and as many condolences about his hotheaded son; and nothing puts my father into such a fury as

the whining of these old crones. Ah, I see the jig's up, and all my honesty comes to nothing. Well, it can't be helped,—I see it coming."

"What can't be helped? Why don't you speak to me, Thomas, and tell me what's the matter?"

"Ah! mother, is it you?—I was thinking about.——What's the matter, ask you? Matter enough, truly. There's young Star sold for a lame cart-horse—a gallant fiery steed you were too, poor Star—the gay furbished gig, dashed into as many fragments as your chandelier, and gone with Pharaoh's chariot wheels, for aught I know. Mother, I've been in too great a hurry ever since, to ask your pardon for running foul your chandelier yesterday. But father came in so close upon me, he liked to have cut his foot with the pieces. There's another mark to my list of sins. Then there's the breaking of Jack's head for not minding me instead of my father, and a score more of worse things, and all within these six days."

"O, Thomas, Thomas, what will become of us?"

"Become of *us*? Why, 'tis none of your doings, Mother. You never broke the gig, or



lamed Star, or cudgeled Jack, that I know of. But stop your grief awhile, for the worst is behind."

"Worse, Thomas! I shall lose my senses. Your father mutters about you in his very sleep; and he has threatened of late to send you out of the house, if you go on at such a rate."

"I know it. Yet I hardly think he would turn me adrift. What if he does? There is room enough; and come fair or foul, I've a ready hand and a stout heart."

"You will certainly kill your unhappy mother if you talk so. Your father says your conduct is all owing to my indulgence, and you have no gratitude or pity for me."

"In faith, Mother, I fear father has the right on't. Come, come, don't make yourself miserable about such an overgrown boy as I am, and I'll tell the rest of my story."

"Mother, I'm a rebel and an outlaw, and the worst of it is, my father's notions of government are as high as the Grand Turk's. Yes, we had old pedagogue flat on his back; and he could no more turn over than a turtle. And when we let him up, he trembled, every joint of him,

knees and elbows, with his fingers hanging straight down like dipped candles."

Here Tom fell a laughing, and his mother burst into tears. Though her weak fondness for him took away nearly all respect for his mother, still Tom loved her, and often blamed himself severely, that he had given her so much trouble, and so often brought upon her his father's displeasure. His heart was touched; and taking her hand, he asked forgiveness for trifling with her feelings. "Do not think that it is because I am careless of what concerns you. You see I play the fool with my own troubles, and I certainly am not indifferent about them."

"I know it, my son. But you will meet with nothing except evil in life, if you do not learn prudence and self-control. You have a good heart, I believe; yet you are giving constant pain and anxiety to your best friends, and must, so long as your passions are your masters, and you, violent and changing as the sea."

Her son promised to set seriously about subduing his passions, and letting his reason have more sway.

As Tom conjectured, Mr. Thornton heard the whole story, and with the usual country village colouring. It was too much for his irascible temper, goaded as it had been of late by his son's inconsiderate conduct. He set off home in great wrath, hurrying over Tom's misdeeds so rapidly and disorderly, that a dozen multiplied and changed places with such swiftness, they showed like a thousand. With his mind thus filled with blind rage, and his body fevered with the speed with which he walked, he entered the house, a very unfit subject for Tom to begin the exercise of his new resolutions upon.

Tom had seen his father coming along the road, and had gone to his room waiting his arrival with a determination to relate the whole affair, confess his error in this and other instances, make known his resolution to change his conduct, and humbly ask forgiveness for the past, and all in a dutiful and composed manner.

Mr. Thornton seized the latch, but with a hand so shaking with rage, that it did not rise at his touch. Heated and impatient as he was, the least thing was enough to make him furious;

he thrust his foot against the door,—it started the catch, and sent it half across the room. The passing sense of shame at his uncontrolled passion only increased his anger; and seeing his son standing in the middle of the room,—“Blockhead,” he cried, darting forward, and with his face almost touching Tom’s, and his clenched fists prest convulsively against his thighs,—“blockhead, dare you fasten me out of my own room?”

The unexpected violence of Mr. Thornton’s manner rather surprised than irritated Tom, and he looked at his father with a composed and slightly contemptuous cast of expression, without making any reply.

Mr. Thornton was sensible how groundless his charge was, the instant he uttered it. He was for a moment discomposed, too, by his son’s calm and haughty bearing; and probably would have been glad, had Tom answered as he sometimes did.

“Do you stand there to insult me, Sir? You may well hold your peace, for what could you say to your infamous and rebellious conduct?”

“Do you mean fastening your door, Sir?” asked Tom with a sneer.

"Door, door, puppy! Look ye, their hinges shall rust off first, e'er you shall open them again, unless you mend your life."

"Say but the word, Sir, and *you* need not be at the trouble of fastening."

"You'r a cold blooded, thankless wretch," stormed out his father. "You were born to be a curse instead of a blessing to me, and you joy in it. You lead a life of violence and riot, and will live and die a disgrace to your family."

"I'll do something to give it a name," said Tom, "if I hang for it. I'll not lead a milk-sop life of it, to be called respectable by old dames, young sycophants, and money lenders."

"A name, indeed! You'll go marked like Cain, and with your hand, too, against every man, and every man's hand against you, and hang you will, unless you mend."

"Better that, than without a name. And be a halter my destiny," said he, looking down upon his manly figure with some complacency; "I shall become a cart as well as another man."

"Fop!" snapped out his father, enraged at Tom's contemptuous, cool trifling.

"I'm no fop. If I'm a handsome fellow, I thank God for it; and where's the harm of that?"

"Do you repeat my words, Sir, and blaspheme in my presence, and set all laws, divine and human, at defiance? Is't not enough to break and destroy what's mine, and keep all at home in an uproar, but you must go abroad to disgrace me, and make yourself the hate and dread of every body, by your violence and rebellion? But you shall be humbled, and that in the eyes of all the world. We'll have that proud spirit of yours down, before it rides over any more necks. Yes, my lad, it is all settled.—The whole school, with you at their head, (for you shall be their leader in this, as you have been in every thing else) shall tomorrow morning down on their knees before their master, and ask his pardon."

"I on my knees to that shadow of a man! No, in faith, I'd stand as straight and stiff before him as a drill sergeant, till my legs failed, e'er I'd nod my head to him. What! he that would whip all faith and honour out of a boy, till he left a soul in him no bigger than his

own! I'll bow to none but him that made me, so help——"

"Hold, hold, said the father; (whose passions were now at their utmost,) have a care before you take an oath on't; for, as I live, you're no longer son of mine, unless you do it."

"Then I'm my own master, and the ground I stand on is my own; for, by my right hand, I'll ask forgiveness of no man living," said Tom, turning resolutely away from his father, as if all was ended.

"Mad wretch," called out his father, "hear me now for the last time; for unless you this instant promise to obey, I'll never set eyes on you more,—and leave this house you shall by tomorrow's light."

"'Tis a bright night," said Tom, looking composedly out of the window, "and the stars will serve as well. I'll not eat nor sleep where I am not welcome," said he, taking up his hat and walking deliberately out of the room.

His determined manner at once satisfied Mr. Thornton that Tom would act up to what he had said; and a father's feelings for the moment took possession of him, with compunction for the violence which had driven his son from him.

He went towards the door to call Tom back, but he was already out of hearing.—“Wilful and headstrong boy,” said the old man, turning and shutting the door after him with a feeling of disappointment, “time and suffering alone can cure you.” Thus for the time he eased his conscience, and was saved the sacrifice of his pride.

Tom was passing through the entry with a hasty step, and had nearly reached the outer door, when the light caught his eye, as it shone from under the parlour door. The sight in an instant recalled him to himself, and stirred every home feeling within him. He heard his mother’s voice as she was reading aloud. The blood throbbed violently to his very throat. The thought that she should be so tranquil, and so unconscious of the affliction that was ready to break upon her, cut him to the heart. If she had been a human victim which he was about to sacrifice, he could not have felt more remorse. He listened a moment. “I must not go without seeing her, without taking her blessing with me,—else I shall go accurst!” He laid his hand upon the latch and raised it a little,—his mother still read on.



With all his violence and rudeness, Tom had a strong affection for his mother. His feelings were softened, and he was humbled and pained at reflecting upon the unjust violence of a father, who, though of a stern and hasty temper, he had heretofore respected. To a mind not wholly depraved, the faults of a parent are almost as mortifying and wounding as its own; and Tom would have given the world, if the wrong had now been in himself alone. "I dare not trust myself to see my mother now. She would make a very child of me, my father would be sued too, and then what becomes of all my resolutions and decision!" "Pshaw," said he, dashing away a tear with one hand, as the other dropped from the latch, "is this the way for one like me to begin the world?" He walked slowly out of the house, and drew the door to gently after him, and passed down the yard, unconscious that he was moving forward till he reached the gate. He opened it mechanically, then leaning over it, looked towards his home. "'Tis an ill parting with you, this," said he; "yet I leave you not in anger. Many a blessing I have had, and many a happy time on't, and many more there might have been for me, had

I not been a froward child. There are few such to come, I fear." He stood with his eyes fixed on the house, while his mind wandered over the past, and what awaited him. The light flashed out cheerfully upon the trees near the window, and their leaves twinkled brightly in it. He cast his eyes round, but the earth looked gloomy in the darkness, for no lights were to be seen but those of the distant stars. "I said that ye would serve me," said he, looking upward, "and if I spoke in anger, Heaven forgive me for it. I must be on my way, and must go like a man."

In the midst of the most violent passions, it is curious to see how quickly and with what care the mind will sometimes lay its plans for future resources. Thomas Thornton, when much younger than at this time, had been made a pet, that he might be used as an instrument, by a lad a little older than himself, of the name of Isaac Beckford. Isaac plotted most of the mischief done at school, and applauded Tom for his sagacity and intrepidity in the execution, always taking care not to demand any praise for his own ingenious contrivances. They in this way became necessary to each other, and after

Isaac left school to reside in the city with his uncle, of the same name, and whose ward he was, he wrote frequently to Tom, urging him to come to town, and share in the amusements in which a large fortune would soon enable Isaac to indulge. Tom now resolved to make his way to the city and have the benefit of his friend's influence to put himself in a situation to be distinguished in the world.

Having made up his mind, though it was somewhat of a journey on foot to the city, and he wholly ignorant of the way, (the village in which he resided lying far off from any great road) Tom marched forward as confidently as if the church spires of the town had been in sight. The character of adventure, freedom and novelty in his condition, the sharp, clear night air, and the crowd and glitter of the stars in the sky, gave an expanse and vivid action to his mind, and roused up the hopeful spirit which for a time had slept within him. "Come, come," said he to himself, "you're a tall boy, Tom, better fitted to shoulder your way through the world, than delve Greek under a starvling pedant."

So intent was he upon his schemes, that he took little heed to the by-road he was travelling, and had walked till near midnight without being conscious of time or fatigue. The perfect stillness about him at last drew his attention, and looking round, he found himself on the top of a small hill in the midst of a country perfectly barren, broken into knolls, and covered, as far as the eye could reach, with large, loose stones. An old tree, at a distance, was all that showed life had ever been here ; and that with its sharp, scraggy, and barkless, gray branches shooting out uncouthly towards the sky, looked like a thing accurst.—“A hard and lonely life you must have had of it here,” said Tom, “and been sadly off for music, if you were at all particular about it ; for I doubt whether any sound has been heard for a long time in your branches, but that of the ravens and the heavy winds. It is as deadly still all around here, as the sky ; I wish I could say it looked as well.—What a pity that gibbets are out of fashion, for this would be a choice place for them ; and could I but hear the creaking of one, I should not have my ears so palsied with this dreadful, intense silence.—There winds a yellow cart-track from

hill to hill, as far as I can see—it's to the left, and omens ill. I'll take this that turns to the right—whether to the world's end or not, time will tell."

And forward he went. He at last grew weary; and as his pace slackened, he began to think of his home, his father and mother, and his many offences. His conscience was touched, and he felt as if undeserving the light of the quiet heavens that shone on him.—"Can one prosper," said he, "as he goes, when his father's anger and mother's grief follow him?"—His heart began to fail, and a thought passed him of trying to find his way back.—"What, and have my father taunt me, and call me a lad of metal? And how like a whipped dog I should look, crawling up the yard! And then that forked master, and his pardon!" cried Tom, clinching his fists till the nails nearly brought blood, and muttering a curse between his teeth, as the tears started to his eyes part in grief and part in unsated rage.—"Would that I had you in my grapple once more, you soulless wretch, and you should never make mischief between men again,—you mere thing!—What, return to all that! No, in faith, I'd sooner be thrown out here like a

dead beast, and lie till all the bones in this body were as bare and white as these stones, e'er I'd go back so."

He travelled on, not rapidly, but with a loose, irregular step. Sustaining and hopeful feelings had left him, and melancholy and self-accusing thoughts were passing in his soul; yet his mind was made up, and supported by a kind of dogged obstinacy.—"There will be no end to this track, as I see. It winds round and over these thousand hills, as if it were delighted at getting into so pleasant a country." He continued his rout.—"Must my voice lose itself forever in the solitude of this stillness? Is there a doom of eternal silence on all things, wherever I go? Will nothing speak to me?"—Presently he heard a low, rumbling sound, as in the earth under his feet. He started, but recovering himself, walked on. It increased to a surly growl, and seemed to spread underneath the hills and through the hollows; and the earth jarred.—"Does nature make experiments with her earthquakes in this out-of-the-way place, before she overturns cities with them?" said he, with a bitter scoff, feeling how little he cared at the moment for what might happen to him.

As he came round a hill, the sound opened distinctly upon him, sending up its roar into the air ; and raising his eyes, he saw at a distance a tall, giant pile, looking almost black against the sky.—“So, my earthquake turns out to be nothing but a waterfall. And why can’t I be fooled again, and be made to believe that clumsy factory, the huge castle of some big, hairy manslayer and violater of damsels? What, shall I be down-hearted now in my need—I who have carried a confident brow and a firm breast against whatever opposed me? It must be that I need food, else how could I be so melancholy? I’ll have that and sleep too before long, and a fresh body and bright morning to start with tomorrow.”

So saying, he took his way toward the building. The path led him to the stream just above the fall. It lay still and glassy to the very edge of the precipice, down which it flung itself, roaring and foaming. The trees and bushes hung lightly over it, and the stars looked as thick in its depths, as in the sky above him. He was about resting himself upon a stone ; but turning, he saw it was a grave-stone.—“It is a holy thing,” said he, “and I will rest

myself elsewhere.”—He looked round,—there was not another grave in sight.—“What, all alone,” said he, “no companions in death? Though we hold not communion with each other in the grave, yet there is something awful in the thought of being laid in the ground away from the dwellings of all the living, and not even the dead by our side. But thou hast chosen thy habitation well, for this stream shall sing a holier and longer dirge by thee, than ever went up from man; yet this shall one day be still, and its waters dried up; but the spirit that was in thee shall live with God.”

He passed along the race-way. The water had left it, the grass was growing here and there in little clumps in its gravelly bottom, its planks and timbers forced up, forked out like a wreck, and the huge wheel, which had parted from its axle, lay broken and aslant the chasm. He looked towards the building. The moon, which was just rising behind it, and shining through its windows, made it appear like some monster with a thousand eyes. Its door-path had grown up, and nothing was heard but the wind passing through its empty length, and here and there the flapping of a window. He went round it, and saw



at a little distance, four or five long, low buildings standing without order, upon a rising ground, without fence or tree, or any thing near them but short, withered grass.—“One would have thought,” said Tom, “that nature had done enough without art’s coming in to help the desolation. Not a light hereabouts. This seems not much like either bed or supper.” He looked in at one house, then another, but nothing was to be seen except bare plastered walls. At last, from one of the houses he spied a light gleaming through a crevice. The sight warmed his heart. He went to the door, and knocked.

“Who’s there?” said one in a female voice.

“A friend.”

“More foes than friends abroad at this hour, belike,” replied the person within.

“I’ve lost my way,” said Tom. “No harm shall come to you, good woman, by letting in a traveller.”

“You promise well and in an honest voice,” said she, as she opened the door. The light shone upon her, and Tom saw before him a tall, masculine woman, with strong features, but with a serious and subdued cast of countenance.

"Who are you, young man? Out on no good intent, I fear, at this time o'night."

"I'm Thornton of Thorntonville," said Tom, with his usual readiness, "an you've ever heard of the place. I was going to the city afoot for once, and have missed my way."

"Thornton of Thorntonville," said the old woman, seeming to recollect herself, "I've seen your father, then, down at the big house yonder. Come in."

"Your fire is comforting," said Tom, sitting down by it, "and it is the first comfortable thing I've met with these long four hours past. But you have made an odd choice of situations, my good woman."

"The poor have not often their choice," said she. "And there are things sometimes which make the bare heath dearer to us than garden or park."

"They are sad things then," said Tom.

"Sad indeed," said the old woman, looking into the fire. She sat silent a little time; then breathing forth a low sigh that seemed to relieve the bosom of its aching, she said to Tom, "you must be over weary, and hungry too, if you are from Thorntonville to-day, for 'tis a long walk ;

and you must have come over the heath ; and one may stand there as at sea,—hill after hill, like thousands of waves, and not a living thing on one of them all, till they run into the very sky. Wide as it is, it would hardly find summer feed for my old Jenny, were it not for the circle of grass that trims round a gray stone here and there.”

“ There is not much to be said for its appearance,” replied Tom. “ I’m not a little tired, too ; and though I can’t well tell how far I’ve walked, there was not a streaked cloud in the sky when I left home.”

“ It must have been a quick foot and a light heart that brought you so long a way in so short a time,” said she, as she was getting ready a bowl of bread and milk. “ The young hurry on, as if life would ne’er run out ; yet many fall by the way ; and I’ve lived to lay those in the ground, whom I looked to have had one day put the sod on this gray head.”

Tom’s thoughts had gone home, but the old woman’s last words were sounding in his ears. “ And who will do that last office for me, or for them ?” thought he. She saw the gloom over Tom’s face ; and believing she had caused it—

"never mind," she said, "the complainings of one whose troubles are nigh over. Here!" giving Tom the bowl,—“you have but one dish to supper, yet that good of its kind; for 'tis short feed that makes the richest milk.”

"Whose is that huge building to the left, that creaks like a tavern sign?" asked Tom.

"It was his who would have made money out of moonshine. But he has gone before his works."

"And they did not bury him yonder to mock him, I trust?"

"O, no," said the old woman, her lips trembling, and a flush crossing her face, "she that I laid there, had no schemes of grandeur; for Sally Wentworth was of a meek and simple heart."

"Forgive me," said Tom, "I should not have spoken of this, had I known how near it was to you."

"You have no forgiveness to ask of me," said the mother; "I'm a lone woman, and there seldom passes here one who cares to be troubled with my griefs; and it is moisture to this dried heart to talk to one who can feel for my afflictions; for Sally was not only my child, but

God has seldom blessed a mother with such a child. And when he took from me my husband, I hope I did not forget his goodness in what he left to me; yet he saw fit to call her too, and his will be done. If grief had not killed her, I could bear my lot better. But how could it be else, when he that she loved was so cruelly taken from her?"

"She died of love then?" said Tom. "'Tis a death seldom met with, and bespeaks a rare mind."

"I know it," replied the mother. "True love is a peculiar and a holy thing; yet those are said to love, who can lay one in the ground, and look fondly on another. O, I have seen it, and it has made me shudder when I have thought of those in the grave. Yes, and many too would scoff at them that were true to the dead; yet they would not, were it given them to know that the grief of such had that in it which was dearer and better than all their joy. My Sally knew it, and it has made her a spirit in heaven. I sit and think over all that happened, but there is not a soul on earth to whom I can tell it."

"If you could think me worthy of it," said Tom, "I would ask you to tell me her story."

"'Tis a sad one, but will not hold you long," said the mother; "for Sally's life was a short and simple one. She was to have been married to an industrious and kind hearted lad. They knew each other when quite children; and grew more and more into a love for each other as they grew in years. And if their attachment did not shew the breaks and passions of those which happen later, it was, I think, deeper seated in its quiet, and seemed to be a part of the existence of both of them. Could you have seen them, as I have, sitting on that very form where you now are, so gentle and happy in each other, you would not wonder that it wrings my heart, now they are both gone from me. But there was a snake crawling and shining in the grass. His eye fell before the pure eye of Sally, yet he could not give over. I dare not speak his name, lest I should curse him, and Sally forgave him, and prayed for his soul on her death bed. The Evil One was busy in his heart, and thwarted and enraged, with his passions wrought up, he attempted that by force, which he did not dare name to her. Though she was of a gentle make, there was no want of spirit in her, and the wretch liked to have fallen by her hand. 'Thank

God,' she has said to me, 'that I did not take his life.'

"She came home, shaking and pale with what had happened, and frightened at the danger she had escaped. Frank met her at the door, and asking her eagerly what was the matter, she hinted, hastily, enough for him to guess the rest. He sprang from the door, with an oath—the first that I ever heard him utter.—She called loudly after him, but he was out of sight in an instant. She looked the way he had gone, almost breathless. 'I spared him,' said she, at last, 'but he may not—he may not.' It was but a little while before Frank came home. He staggered into the house, and fell back into a chair. 'What have you done? Speak, tell me what you have done,' cried Sally. 'You have not, you have not murdered'—Frank grasped his throat, to stop its beating. 'No, no,' said he, scarcely to be heard. 'I struck him but once, and he lay like a dead body before me; and I thought it was all over with him; but he presently opened his eyes upon me, and I dared not stay, for I felt the spirit of a murderer at my heart.' He looked, at the moment," said the old woman, "as if he dropped the very knife from his hand.

“And here,” said she, “the storm began to gather fast and hard. The coward villain found means to raise suspicions against Frank, which threw him out of his employments. Yet so secret was he, as not to be suspected of the deed. The poor fellow wandered over these bare hills day after day, without knowing what to turn his hands to. In the midst of all this trouble the wretch came to him, and begged forgiveness for his conduct to Sally. ‘I can forgive you,’ said Frank, ‘but I do not like looking upon you.’ ‘That is not forgiveness,’ said he, in a mournful and beseeching tone. ‘I was a villain, for I would have done you an injury past remedy. And it was more than I deserved, that you should have spared my life when I was down. I have not had a quiet rest since that time, and never shall, if you don’t suffer me to do something to make amends.’ ‘The best amends,’ said Frank, ‘will be a better life in you.’ ‘I know it,’ he answered, ‘and I hope it will be so, if remorse can give it. But you, too, must give me ease. Though young, my allowance is large. Some evil mind has worked you mischief, I’m told, and you are poor. I do not ask you to take my money as your own—I have no right to. But



do at least show me that you have so far forgiven me, as to suffer me to lend it you, and see you well established in your trade. It is the only atonement left me, and you will not cut me off from that.' Frank refused, and the villain begged like a slave. Frank began to think it was sinful pride, and he thought of Sally, and then he consented. The money was lent, and as soon as Frank had laid it out in stock for trade, the note was put in suit, and he was stripped of all he had and thrown into gaol. Frank found a friend who released him ; and he went to sea. And think," said she, turning to Tom, "he that contrived it all was scarcely older than you are now ; and yet he wears a gay heart and fair outside.

"I need not tell of the parting. It was a bitter one, and no meeting after it. There was a storm at sea, and the ship went down. And many a night have I lain and seen his body heaved up wave after wave, as they took it, one after another, till they bore it away, far, far out of sight. The news came at last ; yet she shed no tear, nor spoke a word ; but her silence was awful—it was like a spirit near me. For many days she sat in that corner with her hands

clasped, and resting on her knees, looking with a glazed eye upon the fire ; and I thought I saw her pining away before me as she sat there. At last she would leave the house at night-fall, when it was chilly autumn, and when the crisped, frozen grass would break under her feet. And I have found her standing on the top of the hill near, many and many a night, with her eyes fixed on the moon, her lips moving and giving a low sound, of what, I could not tell. Nor would she look at me, nor mind that I was by. And I have led her home, and laid her shivering in her bed, and she took no heed of me. At last the cold winds and snow struck her ; but as she lay there on the bed, her mind opened,—it did not wander any more. She said that but one being had done her wrong, and though it was an awful wrong, she was sure that she forgave him, and would pray that he might be forgiven.

“Just before she died, she stretched out her hand to me,—she saw me look at it. ‘It was a fresh hand once, but is dead and shrunken now ; and there are the blue veins,’ said she, tracing them with one of her fingers, ‘where the blood used to flow warm and quick, but they are dried up, though they stand out so. I am going to peace,

mother, and to him that loved me.' The tears fell on her pillow, as she said, 'who will take care of you in your old age?' Then looking upward, and with a bright smile over her face, and without turning towards me,—'God, my mother, God will take care of you.' I felt it like a revelation from heaven.

"She died, and I laid her where she wished to be in that grave you saw by the stream,—for you spoke of one, did you not? I bring water from that stream morning and night; and when the weather is calm, I stop and pray at her grave, and in the driving storm I utter my prayer in the spirit, as I pass by,—and with God it is the same, if it comes from a sincere heart. My story is done," said she, in a low tone. "'Tis late, and you have walked far, and there is a clean bed, though a hard one, for you in the next room." Tom wished her good night; but she did not answer him,—he saw that she could not. "O, Isaac Beckford," murmured she, as Tom shut the door, "there is a heavy sin on your soul; may there be mercy in heaven for you." Tom did not hear the name, nor suspect his friend.

Though he rose early, he found breakfast ready. The hostess looked cheerful, for every

affliction has its comfort to the christian.—“And now,” said he, moving back from the table, “how am I to find my way to the city?”

“Look,” said the old woman, going to the door, “yonder you see the wood which borders this heath, and there are the chimnies of Beckford mansion, and the great road winds near it. You will see no smoke there, though a clear morning,—’tis an empty house now. The heath brought you a short rout, for ’tis only a dozen miles, or so, to town. Nigh enough, I fear, to such a place, for one who has passions like yours.”

“What know you of my passions, good woman,” said Tom, “what have you heard of me?”

“Naught in the world. But do I not see them in the moving of your lip, and the gleam of that eye? Rein them with a steady hand, or they may prove of too hot metal for you.” Tom thanked her, and then offered her money. “You came as a cast-away,” said she, “and I cannot take it.” He tendered it again. “No, no,” she said, mournfully, “I cannot take fare-money of one who has listened to my story.” Tom urged her no further, but wishing her, kindly, good morning, sat out on his way. As he drew

near the city, the roads grew crowded, and his spirits rose. "What a mighty stir is here—and what a medley! Things of all sorts, from horse-cart and check frock to coach and laces! And who is merriest of the crowd, it would be hard to tell. At last came the hubbub and rattle of the city. "One needs a speaking trumpet, to be heard here," said Tom.

By dint of inquiry, a quick eye and ready mind, he at last found the street, and the number of the house of Beckford's guardian. The servant made Tom's arrival known to Isaac. "What, my young *protégé*!" exclaimed Isaac to himself—"and in good time; for soon I shall be a free man, and he must minister to my pleasure, as must every one whom I favour. I must see that he is brought up in the way he should go."

With a deliberate step and plotting mind, he walked down stairs; but rushing swiftly into the room, and running to Tom, he seized him round the shoulders, with a hearty God bless you, and how are you, my old buck." This welcome was a cordial to Tom's heart; for, with all his high spirits, the manner of his leaving home, and what he had passed through since, had depressed him and made him thought-

ful ; and he was ill at ease with himself. After many questions about old playmates, and jokes upon past school tricks, Tom told Isaac that he wished to see him where they should not be interrupted.

"To be sure you shall," said Isaac, stepping into a side room, and locking the door after them. "But what is all this for ; you've no game afoot here already, surely ; or has some hare scaped you ? If so, 'tis I must start her again. I've the scent of a hound, Tom."

"A good quality," said Tom ; "not wanted now, however. I'll tell you what it is." And he told the whole story.

"A pretty child you, to quarrel with your bread and butter. A lad of metal truly. But does one show his spirit, for the sake of getting a broken head ? You must put yourself under my care. I see no reason why we can't live pleasantly enough without the old folks, till your father repents ; which I warrant will be shortly. In the mean time," said Isaac, scanning Tom as he spoke, "there must be a change from top to toe."

"I've no money," said Tom.

"I have, though," said Isaac; "so give yourself no concern." Tom coloured. He had not thought of this before. Isaac burst into a loud laugh.

"Give me leave," said he, as soon as he could speak. "Why, you look as you did when caught by your master stealing his rod. There is no other way for you—if you wo'nt suffer me a trifling favour, you must bilk the tailor."

"I tell you what," said Tom; "I would be under such obligations to no man living but you. And I like not that even. Money favours are but poor bonds of friendship."

"Pshaw," said Isaac, "your father will pay all; and should he be stiff about it, if I credit him, and lose, what's that to you? So, now for a merry year or two to come."

"Not so fast," said Tom; "I want your assistance, but in another way. You've influential friends. I did not come here for sport. I'm for sea, and sea-fights." Isaac gave him a questioning look. "'Tis even so, I'm set upon it, Isaac."

"Well then, so be it. But first, come, see my guardian."

Isaac was right in his conjecture about Mr. Thornton. His wife's anxiety concerning the fate of her son, and the reflection that he had been hasty and unjust towards him, led the old gentleman to write Isaac's uncle (he had little doubt whither Tom had gone). Mr. Beckford stated, in his answer, Tom's desire to go into the navy; and it was concluded that Tom should have a moderate supply of money, and be furthered in his intent, without knowing any thing of his father's share in the business. Isaac therefore appeared as principal, and he took care to increase his influence by it; but he could not turn Tom from his purpose, and he did not like to thwart his rich uncle.

Thornton's mind was so full of ships and the seas, of fights and promotion, that Isaac saw it was impossible to sink him in dissipation at once. "Whatever is that lad's object," said Beckford, "is a passion with him for the time. I must give him line."

"Are you going to run me through, Tom?"

"I was only boarding the enemy."

"That coat is of the true cut, Tom."

"It sits no more to the shape of a man, than



to a partridge. When I am admiral, Isaac,—  
as I shall be”——

“God save you, admiral!”

“I’ll do.”

“What will you do?”

“Pay you the tailor’s bill, for having made me such a thing to show clothes on. Let’s to the ship.—She sits on the water,” said Tom, as they were carried towards her, “as if she were born of the sea. And then again so tall, and light, and graceful, she seems a creature of the air.”—

A few days before sailing, he received a guarded letter from his mother. He threw it angrily upon the table. “No, no,” said he to himself, “this was written under the hard eye of my father.” And he wrote an answer full of affection and high hopes.

As Tom had always resolved to command a ship of war, he had made good use of his time at school to learn all but what practice gives. With a quick insight into whatever he turned his attention to, his many and appropriate inquiries and close and wide observation soon made him familiar with all that could be acquired in port, and to be ready for much that the sea would teach him.

There was a stiff breeze and a clear blue sky, and the whole air was raying with the sun, when Tom bade farewell to Isaac. His brave, fiery, open temper, made young Beckford's sly, cautious, and vicious disposition seem despicable and weak even to himself, and he was fixed upon revenge, with a deadly purpose. He was one of that race who carry a hell within them—who, placed in the rank of ordinary beings, and wanting the bold and sustaining spirit of open hostility, bear secret hate to all above them.

"This is life," said Tom, as he stood looking out on the ocean. "The unseen winds make music over-head; the very ship rejoices in the element in which she moves, and the sea on which we are opening, looking limitless as eternity, heaves as if there were life in it."

Tom had high notions of a ship's discipline, and submitted with a good grace. "And so will I be obeyed," said he to himself, "when my turn comes." Though among his fellow-officers his manner was too impetuous, yet there was something so hearty and frank in it, that they could not take offence. He exacted perfect obedience where he commanded, but was free from cruelty. He was continually learning of experienced offi-

cers ; nor did he suffer the slightest thing which could be of use, to escape his observation. They visited foreign ports ; and with a curiosity all alive and perpetually gratified, this earth was like a new world to him.

At last came the news of a war, and Tom rubbed his hands like an epicure over a smoking dinner. "A bloody battle, and I shall mount,—or fall, and another walk over me—all the same to the world." At last was given the cry of, 'a sail;' and Tom saw a ship ahead rising up, as it were, slowly and steadily out of the sea, as she neared. As she tacked to the wind, he gazed upon her almost with rapture.—"Queen of the sea," cried he, "how silently and beautifully and stately she bears herself!"

"A heavy ship," said an older officer.

"She's a superb bird of passage," answered Tom, "fit messenger for the gods. 'Tis a pity, but we must bring her down."—A distant fire was opened. He looked disappointed and impatient that so little was done.

"You will be gratified to your heart's content presently, young man. We shall have no boys' play to-day."

"Nor do I want it," he answered. "Let it come hot and heavy." And his eye brightened and spirits rose, the closer and harder the fight became.

In the midst of this, the enemy's mainmast swayed once or twice, then came a crash and a cry, and it went by the board. Tom shuddered, and shut his eyes convulsively, as he saw the poor fellows go with it. All was in a moment forgotten, when the ship he was in, falling on the other's bow, the cry, 'to board,' was heard. He jumped upon the enemy's deck with the spring of a tiger. They gave way. He was foremost through the fight, with a wet brow and clotted hand. In a few minutes the deck was cleared of all but the dead and dying. All was bustle and joy on one side; and Tom's heart swelled, when the captain in his warmth shook him heartily by the hand. But no one envied him, so meekly did he bear it. He stepped back a little; a dying man gave his last groan at his feet. Tom started, and looking down, saw the sightless, open eyes of the dead man turned up towards him. It shrunk his very heart up. "And has this been my sport?" said he. "God forgive me." The prize was sent home, and Tom went in

her, second in command, with a favourable notice of his conduct.

"I am worn with this incessant heave of the sea," said Tom, as he hung over the ship's side, "and long to be ashore, and smell the earth again, and mix in the occupations of men. The moon shines as fair here, and looks as happy, showing her dimpled face in the water, as if she had all the world to worship her. The sky and earth hold blessed and silent communion, which we, who crawl about here, think not of. Would I could share in it, and mingle with the air, and be all a sensation too deep for sound—a traveller amongst the stars, and filled with light. I am a thing of clay—a creature of sin," he murmured, as he turned, and went to his cabin.

The rim of the sea was of gold, when the sun was wheeled slowly up, and burnished the whole ocean. The light flashed up into Thornton's cabin windows. His soul enlarged itself as he looked out upon this life of the world. Going upon deck, he found there an officer.

"What, up before me?"

"Yes, I've been watching the harbour light, till it went out like the morning star." Tom

turned, and the gay islands that laid softly upon the sea, looked to him like messengers sent to welcome him to land ; and as he made the shore, the very dark rocks seemed sociable, as if they had come down to meet him. He landed with an exulting spirit amidst the cheers of the populace, and hearty congratulations of the few acquaintances he had formerly left behind. Isaac was not amongst them ; and upon inquiry, Thornton learned that he was out of town at old Mr. Beckford's, late his guardian. As soon as Tom could leave the city, he drove out thither.

As he dashed along with a speed that made the fields and trees appear hurrying by him, he thought of the time when he trudged the same road afoot, and an out-cast, and not noticed of a passer-by. "I always felt that I should rise, and make men look up at me ; and I will be higher yet e'er long. Neither will it be a gallows elevation, as my father prophesied in his anger. What a triumph I have gained over them ! They shall not fail to hear of it in full, and that shortly. What a selfish wretch am I ! Whose hearts, in all the world, will be prouder and gladder than their's at my success ?"—He whirled up the circular way to the house, and sprang to the ground

as light as if buoyed by the air. There was one who saw him from behind the window-curtain. "What a gallant fellow," said she! "He descended to the earth like one of the gods. What a form! Who can it be? It must be young Thornton. Yes, the whole face tallies with what I've heard of his daring and impetuous character. Heigh-ho, I wonder what's become of Mr. Henley. I hope he has not broken his poor neck, and rid himself of his million of complaints at once."

Tom followed the servant, and came so suddenly upon Isaac, that he was not prepared to make his usual demonstrations of joy. Tom felt it for an instant. But Isaac, seeing his error, began repairing it, by asking question after question, hardly giving Tom time to answer one of them, and expressing all the while the warmest joy at his success.

"Well, Tom, half a dozen years have done much for you."

"Yes, and I mean that six to come shall do more."

"Well resolved, as usual, and surely, I've no doubt; for you have fire and skill to melt and cast to your liking. Come along, and take a

look at my fair cousin—cousin I call her, though a third remove. But, have a care, my boy, for her worn out rake of a husband knows what a woman is, and has a lynx's eye."

There is nothing better calculated to put a man in a woman's power, than bidding him be on his guard against her; for he at once imagines that he may be an object of interest to her, and that there is something in her worth being a slave to.

When Thornton entered the room, the sun was down, but the deep clouds were on fire with his light, and threw their warm glow upon a rich crimson sofa, on which rested, clad in white drapery, the beautiful Mrs. Henley. She was leaning on her elbow which sunk into a cushion, raising her a little, giving a luxurious curvature to the body, and showing the limbs in all their fine proportions and fulness. Her wrist, a little bent, shone with a dazzling whiteness, while her fingers were half hid among the leaves of a costly book. Her fairy foot, in a white satin slipper, was playing in the deep flounce of the sofa, and as she rose with a pretended embarrassment, the exquisitely turned ankle glanced for an instant on Thornton's sight. Something shot



through his breast with the acuteness of an electric shock ; and it was with difficulty that he could give utterance to the passing compliments. His confusion was not unobserved by Isaac or the lady ; and they were both determined to turn it to their purpose, but from very different motives.

Mrs. Henley lived in Isaac's neighbourhood long before her marriage ; and her fine person and beautiful face, and the slow, wavy outline which deep passion gave to her movements, had excited in him, to an intense degree, all that he was capable of feeling for a woman. The loose and evil passions were strong in him ; and as he was without true courage, he gratified them by ingenuity and trick. When such persons are understood, the men despise, and the women loathe them. All his endeavours to ingratiate himself with his cousin, only made him the more disgusting to her ; for when he was most intent upon pleasing her, his manner was a mixture of fawning and condescension, which moved her contempt and touched her pride. And sometimes she revenged herself by cold disdain, at others, by turning him to ridicule with her playful and ready wit. But Isaac could submit to be

trodden on, so he could gain his object, or compass his revenge ; and he swore Fanny should be Mrs. Beckford, or rue the day she married another. He had failed in his first purpose, and was now wholly bent on vengeance. He saw the effect that Tom had produced on her, and that he was not untouched. Isaac's plan was formed ; and though he had determined to make Tom a mere instrument for his own end, he hated him for that very preference which had been shown him, though it made him more easily his tool.

Fanny, with all her hate of Isaac, would have been Mrs. Beckford, had no better establishment offered. She was selfish, of strong passions, regardless of principles, of unbounded extravagance and ambition, with a mind somewhat tasteful, yet fond of the showy, of high spirit, and of quick intellect (which, in fashionable society, answers all the purposes of wit,) and with art to appear whatever she chose to be at the time. She was balancing in secret the *pros* and *cons* of a marriage with Isaac, when Mr. Henley, who had wasted one fortune early in life, now suddenly presented himself with a broken constitution and fretful disposition, but

with a large estate, to which he had just succeeded, and she in due time became Mrs. Henley. She soon devoted herself to spending his fortune, and leaving him to his doctor and nurse.

"Why, Tom," said Isaac, in a laughing way, but with a malignant purpose, "you were as careless and easy in company of the ladies before you went to sea, as you were at our whist club; but you look as awkward now as some Jonathan, who is working himself up to a tender of himself and kine, to a country maiden. Does the salt water always have such an effect?"

"If it does," said Fanny, "there are more virtues in a sea voyage than I have before heard of; and it might be a benefit to some whom I had long put down on the list of incurables."

"Why, coz, one so pretty as you should only shoot cupid's arrows, and not wound us with those of wit."

"'Tis pity it should have mischiefed you; I but shot it o'er the house."

"And wounded your brother."

"Something too much akin, that, Isaac."

"Then you are not for the platonics?"

"Not with a handsome youth like you."—  
Isaac bit his lip; and Tom laughed.

"Why, Isaac, did I ever before see you foiled at an encounter of wits? Your's have grown dull since I left you. Have them sharpened—have them sharpened, Isaac."

"So do, Isaac, and on your heart," she whispered, "it will serve."

"I will," he muttered to himself, "and that you shall find to your cost, ye young ones."

At that moment Mr. Henley entered, leaning on the arm of old Mr. Beckford, who, now far advanced in life, was of a cheerful, fresh and benevolent aspect. Mr. Beckford shook Thornton heartily by the hand, and welcomed him well ashore. The other was a tall, stooping, gaunt figure, with a sallow and thin face, dark, hanging eyebrows, and a glancing, cautious eye. With all this, he showed the remains of a handsome person, and was what is commonly called a polished gentleman. He received Tom with a courtly distance.

"My dear," said his wife, affecting concern, "you don't know how uneasy I've been about you."

"Perhaps not," he replied, without regarding her, and in a low monotone, as if talking to himself.

"I'm really afraid you have caught your death this cool evening."

"O, you're too anxious about me; I do not feel myself dying quite yet," he answered in the same manner. Tom ground his teeth against each other, at these surly replies.

They met at breakfast; and the rich evening dress was changed for a simple robe; and Fanny looked as fair as if she had bathed in the dew of roses. When the uncle and husband were out of the way, Isaac gave such a turn to the conversation, as would lead to his object. Then he proposed a walk in the little wood near the house; and when they had entered it, suddenly remembered some particular business, and left Tom and his cousin together. The light shawl caught in the branches, and what less could Tom do, than adjust it carefully over the finest shoulders in the world, unless we except the Venus—but hers are not living shoulders. There was a brook to pass, and an unsightly tree lying rudely across the path, and last of all happened that fatal though common accident—and the shoe lacing was seen trailing the ground.

Before many days Tom had lost all control over himself. He had but one feeling and one thought.

Isaac saw that affairs were going too fast. "The husband will be upon the trail, and the sport will be all up. We must have doublings and crossings!"

The husband was not so quicksighted as Isaac feared. He had always been jealous of his wife, and not without reason. Jealousy, however, like most passions, discriminates but poorly; and Mr. Henley had been as much alarmed and as impatient at little circumstances, a thousand times before, as he was at what was passing now.

The uncle, who was a looker-on, and knew well the wife's character and Tom's ardent temperament, joined with Isaac, though from opposite motives, in urging Tom to hasten his visit to his father, from whom he had received a kind letter calling him home. He had not lost his affection for his parents, but he was completely infatuated. Day after day was fixed for the visit, and it was as many times put off. "I will propose going with him, and to-morrow," said Isaac to himself. "I am not ready for the catastrophe. He must be more in my power. He must rake, he must game, he must want money." For the passion which Isaac saw in

his cousin, for young Thornton, had worked up towards him the hate of a fiend.

After much urging, Tom was ready, and they started. It was in vain that Isaac endeavoured to draw him into conversation. At length his home appeared in sight. It gave Tom the first happy feeling he had been conscious of since leaving Beckford house. It was with sincere joy he saw his parents, and his mother's tears touched his heart. With all his affection, Tom grew restless in a day or two, and pleaded his duties as a reason for his return. The old gentleman had received from Mr. Beckford a letter, hinting at Tom's dangerous situation. He took his son aside, and talked kindly and earnestly with him upon the subject. Tom at first denied that there was any thing to fear.—“Look carefully into your heart,” said his father. Tom did, and then swore that he would think no more of her.—“Oaths will not do it, Tom; the mind must be bent up to fly the temptation, or you run to your ruin.”—Tom promised to himself and to his father that he would; but the next day hastened to it with speed of fire.—“I cannot show her indifference at meeting, but at least I will appear composed,” thought he.

Isaac caught a glimpse of his cousin, and made an excuse for leaving the carriage, before reaching the house. Thornton met her in the entry. She sprang forward towards him; then shrinking back, and glowing with what Tom took for shame, let fall her beautifully fringed lids. He spoke in a tremulous voice. She uttered a broken word or two; then lifting her eyes to his, showed them drinking deep of passion. He would that instant have folded her to him, but a step was heard in the room. He darted out of the house, muttering between his teeth something of his disappointment, and a curse on the fool who caused it.

He walked on, his brain maddened with the tumult of passions within him. He was not sensible whither he was going, till he suddenly saw at his feet the grave of Sally Wentworth. He recoiled from it like a fallen angel from the presence of the holy; and his abominations rose up before him, black and awful. He felt like an out-cast from heaven, as if the very dead condemned him, and shut him out as a creature unfit to lie down in rest with them.

“The dead, the dead, no passions are torturing them; but shall I ever shake off mine?” He



was leaning upon the grave-stone,—his eyes fixed on the grave,—shuddering at his own passions, and thinking on the quiet below him, when some one spoke.—“Thomas Thornton,” said the voice, “it is well for us to be here.” He turned suddenly, and met the solemn, but mild countenance of Sally’s mother. She observed the dark expression of his face.

“That should not be the face of one who holds communion with the dead,” said she.

“What ails thee, man,—thou lookest like one condemned for his crimes, yet afraid to die. ’Tis an awful thing so to live, as to fear to die.”

“It is not death I fear, good mother, it is life,—it is myself.”

“And dare ye fear to live, and yet not dread to die, Thornton? There is a double and a woful curse on thee then.”

“Do not curse me, and standing here, too, lest the dead sanction it.”

“No, she that lies here, cursed not him that brought misery upon her. Neither would I, thee. It becomes not us to condemn one another. But I fear for you, Thornton, I fear for you. And did I not, the morning you left me, warn you take heed to your passions?—I cannot talk with

others here," said she, partly to herself, and looking on her daughter's grave.—She turned away, and he followed her.

"I have looked to see you, day after day," she said, as they walked towards the house; "for I have taken more concern in you, than I ever thought to again in fellow mortal. It has been whispered me how you left home the night you knocked at my door; and it did my heart good to hear, a few days ago, that you had gone to see your father and mother. Nor for that alone was I glad, but that it might break the web that I saw a subtile spider weaving over you."—Thornton coloured. "You have not darkened this door," said she, as they drew up to the cottage. "My eye has been upon you, nevertheless, at the house yonder." They both turned towards it.

"'Tis she!" cried out Thornton, "where can she have been?"

"Here, no doubt, and for no good purpose, I fear. For little have I seen of her for months past; and now she has but just missed you," added the old woman, casting a look of rebuke upon Tom. His cheek flushed a deep, burning red; but his eager and impatient eye was

fixed, like a hound in leash, on the figure at a distance. He stood for a moment silent, and leaning forward. "How this heath opens wide, round about her, that the world may see her move! I must be gone, good mother."

"Hold, hold," said the old woman, laying her hand on his arm, and fastening her eye on his fiery countenance, "art mad?"

"Mad? Ah, mad as the winds. She'll be beyond reach instantly. I must go."

"By the spirit of her whose grave you just stood by," said the old woman in a low voice, "I bid you stay." His hands fell powerless, but his eye still rested on the object. She was ascending a rising ground; and as she reached the top of it, and her form appeared against a burnished evening sky, her long purple mantle waving in the winds, "she touches not earth," he cried, "but moves in glory amidst the very clouds."

"Monster!" cried the old woman, in a tone of horror; and, lifting her finger, said, "can you look yonder, and worship any but God?" The voice went through him like a word from heaven.

"Mother, forgive me," said he, humbled and ashamed.

"Ask forgiveness of him you have offended, and not of me." As she looked upon him, her heart yearned towards him as a mother's for her child.—He raised his eyes timidly towards the west once more, but she, whom he sought, had gone down the hill, and was out of sight. His countenance fell.

"Would that she could pass so from your mind!"

"Would that I could be taught to wish it," he murmured.

"Turn then," said she, pointing to the sky, "and learn to love the works, that God has made, and still keeps innocent. They are his messengers to us, the ministers of his power, the revealers of his love for us. To rejoice in them, to feel the heart moved by them, is true worship. O! I have stood, at an hour like this, and looked, till I have thought the light of heaven was opened to me, and God was near me."—She turned once more towards Thornton. His countenance had become calm and elevated.—"My son," said she, "could you learn to fill yourself with such thoughts as are now within you, the allurements

of the world would be a tasteless show to you. But the heart must love something,—it must be sin or goodness.”—There was a short pause. At last said the old woman, “She you hunt after is another’s. She vowed herself his at the altar, and if it is a stain on her soul, would it for that be less a sin in you to wrong him?”

“I would wrong no man,” said Thornton.

“What! can you say how far you will go, when you cannot stop now?”

“I will, I will,” he answered, “even now.”

“Beware that you stumble not through too much confidence. Turn away from the temptation; for she who tempts you, I fear, is eager to draw you on. I would not speak it of her but for your good,” said the old woman, the colour coming to her pale cheek—“for she was my foster-child, and has slept in these arms, and I loved her next to my own. But ambition and vanity and all unchecked passions have been busy at her heart. It was for houses and lands and a high place in the world, that she bartered herself; and she who will do that by holy covenant, may one day do it without bond. You are now going into the world again; but carry with you, if you would have mercy on your soul,

what I have said ; and as you keep it with you, so, I trust, heaven will bless you."

He grasped her hand, and then turned and walked homeward. She looked after him till he was lost in the twilight ; then went into her house with a sunken and misgiving heart.

Thornton went directly to his chamber. He was afraid of Isaac's ridicule, and dared not trust himself with a sight of Mrs. Henley. He was melancholy and humbled ; but there was a virtue in his state of mind, which made him less impatient of himself than he had been for many weeks past. He thought of the widow and her daughter—of death, and what's to come, and his passions subsided, and the storm and wreck of the mind seemed clearing and settling away, and he had the quiet sleep of a good man. But the light and stir of day, which scatter our resolves and fill us with the present, came on ; and the gay and beautiful vision of Fanny broke upon him with the morning sun.

He sprang from bed ; and in his eagerness to hasten down stairs, every thing was out of place, and fretting him with delay. None but domestics were up. He walked out a few steps, and then returned, and thus continued till the break-

fast hour arrived. He met only Mr. Beckford and Isaac at table. His eye was constantly on the door.—“Mr. Henley and lady left us about dusk last night, for the city,” said the old gentleman. Thornton’s countenance changed.—“I fear you will never be a gallant,” said Isaac. “To think that you should not be here, to bid so fair a lady farewell! But you may make such amends as you can, for we all move town-ward to-morrow.”

The next day they reached the city.—“Make yourself ready,” said Isaac, “for we are to go to Henley’s to-night, you know.” As they passed along the streets, the brilliantly lighted shops, the gay faces and talk within them, and then the shadow of some building thrown in straight line across the pavement, and some one stealing through it in silence, gave a sudden contrast, and a strange mixture of open gayety, and mysterious stillness to the scene, which excited Thornton’s mind, at the same time that he felt a cautious fearfulness stealing over him. Then was heard the distant rumbling of a carriage—presently it would shoot by them with a stunning rattling of the wheels, and sharp clatter of the horses’ hoofs, every now and then

striking fire, and all would die away again in the distance and darkness.

They at length reached the superb mansion of Mr. Henley. It was like entering into broad daylight. It shone like the fairy palaces in the Arabian Nights. And there she stood under a large chandelier, richly and splendidly dressed ; her fair skin sparkling with an almost metallic brightness, and her eyes full of light and action. At the first glance she coloured ; but recovering herself with a practised readiness, gave Thornton a frank welcome, at the same time introducing him to the circle about her. Those who observed his confusion, set it down to bashfulness, and as such, passed it by. She was in full spirits, talked much and brilliantly ; and his grand figure and face, his honest vehemence and hearty good nature, drew round them the choicest part of the company. Then came the dance with all its windings and wavy motions, and her soft hand rested too long in his. The fingers of each trembled, and told what they should not. The flame was again lighted up within him, and it rose and swept along with the rush and desolation of a forest fire. He lingered as long as Isaac dared let him ; and was at last half drawn



away by him from the house. He passed the remainder of the night, at one time calling himself a madman and villain, and then, in his hot impatience, swearing that no earthly power should bar him his way. The thought of her now fully possessed him. She saw the power she had over him, and loved it too well to risk it, by too easily yielding to his passion. He had no rest out of her presence, followed her wherever she went, and was at her house, morning and evening.

"Tom," said Isaac, one day, "do you know that the world begin to talk about you, and my sweet coz?"

"I care not for their talk. What have they to do with me or her?"

"Much, my young blood, so long as you make a part of the world. And it is something to me, Tom, and touches me nearly. You know not your danger; but I must not let you bring disgrace upon any of our relations, however distant. Besides, the husband grows suspicious; and would you spill his blood, or throw so fine a girl out from fortune?"

"God forbid," said he warmly. "Yet, I know not, Isaac,—my power has gone. Save me, save me."

"And so I will, if you'll be a man. We must change the scene; and you shall see some good fellows, and be as merry as ever, I warrant ye. Come along with me."

Tom followed as if all self-will was gone. And he talked and laughed and had his joke, and was called a lad of spirit. He drank to excess, and grew restiff. The cool Isaac kept an eye upon him, without being observed, and took him off in time. "This will suffice for a beginning," said Isaac to himself. "We will minister a little more freely next time."

Thornton waked languid, and full of remorse; still he found himself in a few hours at Henley house. Isaac did not try to prevent it. He was only retarding the accomplishment of Tom's wishes, that he might ruin him altogether. Then came more riot and excess, and lastly, gambling. And Tom played rashly and lost; for he was trying to fly from himself, and cared not for fortune. And Isaac lent him money now and then, and oftener

found other friends to furnish him.—All was ripening for Isaac's purposes.

In the midst of this, Tom received a letter from his father, written in the anguish of the mind, and calling upon his son, if he would not blast an old man's hopes, to leave the city and come to him. The letter spoke of Tom's mother, her distress, and the fondness with which, in the midst of it, she clung to her only child. Tom stamped upon the floor, and tearing his hair in the agony of his feelings, cursed himself as the vilest wretch alive. "I will go to them," cried he, "I'll go, by to-morrow's light." The morning came, and then he thought of taking an eternal farewell and the like. He lingered, and Mrs. Henley's carriage drove by. There was a familiar nod, and a smile, and his resolutions were again gone with the wind. That night he played, and lost, and grew angry almost to madness. Then came a duel,—he was wounded, and called a man of honour.

In a day or two he was able to visit at Henley's. Nothing interests a fashionable woman half so much, as a genteel young fellow with his arm in a sling, particularly if he received his hurt in a duel. Mrs. Henley turned pale when

she saw Thornton, spoke breathingly of his wound, and asked a thousand kind questions about it.—“The arm hangs a little too low; let me shorten the handkerchief.” And standing before him, her arms were round his neck, as she was trying to untie the knot. Their hearts beat quick. Thornton could control himself no longer, but prest her madly to him. Her head sunk upon his shoulder, while she murmured that he would be her ruin. There were vows of eternal love, and protestations of honour, and an assignation—and all made at once. The last was not kept, for Mr. Henley left town early the next day, compelling his wife to accompany him. He had heard and seen enough to confirm his suspicions. He did not want courage to call Tom out, but relished little the thought of being pointed at as the unhappy man who had been engaged in an affair of honour with his wife’s friend.

When Thornton called in the morning, the house was shut up. He rung, but no one came to the door. After walking some time before the house, he returned to inquire of Isaac whither they had gone. Isaac could only conjecture. Tom uttered the direst imprecations upon the

jealous dolt's head. Isaac affected to be amused at Tom's wrath.

"Why, the wench has jilted you, my young sprig. You stood shill-I shall-I too long." But he bit his lips, and swore inwardly; for all his plotting had come to nothing.—"I'll hunt them the world through," cried Tom, "ere I'll be thus thwarted."

He went to his chamber, and found on his table a letter, showing the greatest alarm in his mother, for his father's life. "What! does death cross between me and her," exclaimed he, wildly. His blood curdled with horror at the thought of what he had uttered.—"She has made me a child of hell," he cried in the agony of the passions fighting within him. "Let me be gone, let me be gone from this place of sin." He reached home in time to close his father's eyes and lay him in his grave. There was something more than grief in him for his father's death. It was the fear that he had hastened it on. "He was proud of me," said Tom to himself, "hair-brained as I was. And I gave him hope, and in the midst of it, let a woman, who perhaps has forgotten me, cut it off; and I've laid him in his grave, sorrowful and disap-

pointed. He had a soul of honour ; and I, who was his son, did all I could to debase him."

The grief of his mother and her imploring helplessness, took Thornton's mind off from its regret and painful thoughts, while it softened his heart, and laid it open to those kind and gentle affections, against which it had for a long time been shut. His manner to her was as mild, and soothing, and regardful, as if no headlong passions had ever stirred him. There was something almost parental in it. And when the time came that he should adjust his father's affairs, in order to go to sea again, he was delicate and generous towards his mother, to an extreme.

When the hour arrived for him to leave her, she hung round him, and wept bitterly. "There is now no one, Thomas, but you left for me, in all the earth, to lean upon ; and my soul cleaves to you as all betwixt me and death. Remember your fond old mother, when you are gone from her. You will think of me on the seas, but, forgive me, Tom, you may not in the city."

"Think not so hardly of me, mother ; my heart is not all scared yet. Can I lose all thought of you any where, when, perhaps," he said,

brushing a tear from his lash, "it is I who have made you so soon to be alone? No, I will remember you not only in sorrow and in hours of solitude and thoughtfulness, but bear you with me in my daily life, and think how dear are a mother's pride and joy in a good son."

And when he left her, he begged her blessing with as submissive and meek a feeling as ever entered man's soul. Intimate affections and beautiful thoughts were forever shooting up within him; but his passions would sweep over them like a strong wind, and leave them torn and dead in the dust.

He reached the city a few days before sailing. His composed, serious manner awed Isaac, and made him hate him more than ever. Thornton discharged his debts contracted with money lenders, and found enough left out of his father's estate to pay Isaac. Isaac would have put off receiving it.—"I shall never forget your kindness," said Tom. "But I cannot see why you would keep a friend under such an obligation, and that too unnecessarily, and against his will." Isaac took the money without farther parley, with a resolution of persevering in Tom's ruin,

which, in a good cause, would have done honour to a saint.

Thornton more than once passed Henley house, as he strolled out in the night; and he would stand and look towards it, till the bright figure of her he thought on grew luminous to his mind; and he would follow it till his eyeballs ached, as it past off into the darkness. The passion had been laid for a time, but only to burst out more violently than ever. Before, it took possession of him in the uproar of the mind, but now, it had become mixed with his deepest sensations and most serious purposes.

In a few days the ship bore him from shore. He was gone two years; but in all countries, through the hot and successful fight, in storm and calm, the sense of this woman clung to him like his very being. And when he at last spied the gay city rising as it were out of the water, he leaped, like a child, for joy.—“Neither man, nor land, nor sea, shall keep me from her longer. Some devil may have possessed me, but I cannot, I will not, struggle any more. She’s mine, come on’t what may.”—And he was given over to his terrible passions, with little to thwart



them ; for he found the elegant Mrs. Henley a gay and splendid widow.

Thornton had returned, it was true, without money, but then he had the grandest face and figure in the world, and he was the talk of every body. Besides, as fascinating as the widow was, her character was a little worse than doubtful, and few men liked her extravagant and high spirit.

Isaac put in for her favours, and was repulsed. He was silent, but the wound rankled. Old Mr. Beckford warned Thornton. Tom grew angry and avoided him ; and Isaac helped on the match without appearing to do so. The old gentleman gave Mrs. Thornton notice ; and she wrote her son, imploring him to come to her, or, at least, not to plunge himself headlong into ruin. She called upon him in the name of his father, and as he cared for her life. It was all in vain ; he would hear nothing, he would see nothing ; he was married, and undone.

For a time, all was blaze and motion and sound. No house was furnished like the dashing Mrs. Thornton's, no parties half so splendid. No dinners so costly, and got up in such taste, as the captain's, and no one drove such a four-in-

hand. And if high life may in truth be called life, no one knew how to live better than the Thorntons. But it becomes our disease, it breaks up our thoughts, and kills our hearts, and makes what should be individual and fresh in us, common and stale. Politeness becomes feigning, and the play of the affections is lost in the practice of forms.

Thornton began soon to find it so ; and to relieve its satiety, he pushed farther into excesses. A kind of feeling, too, rather than reflection, was growing up in him that beauty, and high spirits, and a bright, ready intellect in a woman, would not stand in the stead of principle, and delicacy, and a fond heart. His pride also was hurt, that instead of being looked up to with kind regard, he was treated rather as an important part in a splendid establishment, that his fine person was praised, and elegant manners admired, and even his very mind valued, just so far as they served for an ornament, and a help to notoriety.

He received frequent letters from his mother complaining of his seldom writing, and his not coming to visit her in her deserted state. She spoke of her low spirits, her feeble health, and

her concern for him. Melancholy reflections were made, of a general nature, but such as he well knew how to apply to himself. He saw that her love of him, her disappointment and anxiety, were wearing her away, and the awful thought that he was hurrying her to the grave, crossed him in all his riot and excess.

The power over himself was gone; he had become the slave of his passions; and they bore him along with a never resting swiftmess. He found the woman, for whom he had sacrificed all that was worthy in his character, selfish and regardless of his feelings. The disappointment made him hurry into dissipation with the craving appetite of a diseased man; and Isaac was always a friend at hand, to assist him. His wife was no less extravagant than he; and at last came borrowing and mortgages; and squandering seemed to increase as their fortune lessened. He ran into gaming to retrieve his circumstances, but with galled feelings and fevered brain; and it made his condition the more desperate.

Isaac's spirits rose, as he saw Thornton sinking. He, as before, assisted him in procuring loans, and lent him money besides.—“The day is near,” said Isaac, to himself, “in which I

shall live to see that lordly spirit brought down. And my other end shall be compassed too, let it cost me ever so dear. Yes, my proud madam must be supported in her magnificence; but the scorned and loathed Isaac must be wooed then like the dearest of men. What care I, though she feign it like the commonest of her sex, and curse me in the midst of it, in the bitterness of her heart,—does it not make fuller my revenge !”

And on he went, wily and playfully, to his object. Though he had a spirit of avarice not to be gluttoned, yet he would throw out his wealth like water, to sate his hate or lust. He caused information of Thornton's circumstances to be given to one of the creditors. He took care to be at the house when service was made. Thornton's wrath was beyond all bounds, he threatened the officer's life, swore it was his wife who had brought him to disgrace and ruin, and cursed his folly that he had ever married. She said something sneeringly about half-pay captains. Tom's eyes flashed fire, and Isaac became mediator.—“Upon my word, Thornton, my dear friend, you must command yourself, or this will get wind, and they will all be on you, like harpies. For heaven's sake command your-

self.—My dear Sir, how great is the demand? Upon my soul, no trifling sum. Let me see,—I've a deposit for a certain purpose. I must contrive to meet that in another way; my friend must not be ruined thus." He made himself answerable to the officer.—"And here, Tom, you must give this as hush-money to the man. You have used him too roughly."—This was done in the presence of the wife.

Affairs had now nearly reached the worst. And Thornton's disappointments and troubles had almost made a madman of him. When heated with wine or loss at play, his rage made him dangerous, and he became the dread of his companions. Nothing but Isaac's plausible and smooth manner had any control over him, and with Isaac, Thornton was like a tiger with his keeper.

Old Mr. Beckford, with the best intentions, frequently wrote Tom's mother about him. It only served to hasten the wretched woman's decline, and drive him on the faster, that he might shake off the remorse which his mother's letters caused him.

Isaac never shut his eyes upon his object; and as Tom's utter ruin drew near, and the time had

almost come of fulfilling his plans, and accomplishing his last wish, it required all the hypocrisy of his nature not to break his purpose too soon to the wife. He knew that he had no strong virtue to struggle against, but something nearly as stubborn, a woman's dislike. And he played his part well; he was humble, he was grieved for their situation, he spoke timidly of his long contest with himself to overcome his love for her, and the misery it caused him; and shrunk back when he saw scorn writhing in her lip. Then he spoke of his fortune, and his wish that he had been worthy to have saved such a woman from poverty, and the neglect which a hard world might one day show her. And so he wound his way.

She hid not her contempt from him; she scrupled not to say that it was dread of poverty, and fall from high life, that made her yield to the man she despised—that she had seen through his designs long ago. Still he supplied her with money to support her extravagance; and she made him throw her husband's obligations into the fire before her, with his own hands. She yielded, and the man obtained that for which he

had hunted hard for years, and the devil had his triumph.

It lasted not long. Thornton's suspicions were awakened. He did not burst out in fury. Every passion within him settled down to a deathlike stillness. His mind seemed suddenly to take all the shrewdness and ingenuity of the crazed in effecting their object. And he traced out, step by step, all the windings of the subtile Isaac.

At last, he tracked him to the place of assignation; the entrance was barred. He broke it down with the strength of an enraged giant. Isaac fled through another passage, as Thornton entered. Thornton heeded not his wife; his soul was bent up to one purpose, and that a terrible one, and he saw no other object in the world. He followed with the speed of lightning; but passing swiftly by a narrow, dark side-passage, through which Isaac had escaped, missed his prey. He wound through all the passages of the house, with the eagerness of a blood-hound,—then through the by-lanes of the city, till he reached Beckford's house. He asked of the servants, in a perfectly composed manner, for Mr. Beckford. He had gone

out some time before, and had not returned. Thornton saw that they were not deceiving him. He walked the city the rest of the day, and returned at night to prepare himself for a journey, for he thought Isaac must have left town. In a little while he was ready ; but passed the night in further search. In going to and from the house, he did not seem to be sensible of the absence of his wife, or to recollect that he had one.

About dusk the next evening, he learnt that one of Beckford's best horses was missing. In an instant he was mounted, and was soon out of sight of the city. Yet he could only conjecture Isaac's route. He continued his pursuit till about night-fall, in perfect silence, and with his mind full of undefined thoughts of vengeance.

He was riding along a dangerous, narrow track, near the edge of a precipice, at the foot of which was running a swift tide, when, just as he was turning the corner of a rock, his horse's head suddenly crossed the neck of another horse, held by a man who was walking cautiously by his side. Though it was growing dark, and the man was muffled, Thornton knew him the instant his eye fell upon him ; and springing to the ground, with a shout, stood full before Isaac.



The great coat fell from Isaac's ashy face. He could neither speak nor move.—“Have I you then,” cried Thornton, grappling the trembling wretch by the throat, and lifting him upright off his feet. He gave a keen glance, for an instant, down the precipice, without speaking, and then looked doubtingly.—“No, no,” said he, “I'll not take the dog's life so.—Hold, there, you curse of man,” said he, drawing out his pistols, and handing one to Isaac. Isaac put out his hand to take it, without seeming to be conscious of what was to be done.—“Stand there,” said Thornton, “and make sure your aim, for the last hour of one or both of us has come.”—Isaac's hand trembled so that his pistol fell to the ground.—“Have ready, man, or you're gone,” screamed Thornton, frantic with rage.—Isaac could not move.—“Down, then,” cried Thornton, and the fire of the pistol flared over Isaac's wild eyes and convulsed open jaws. His arms tossed upward in the agony of terror and death, and he fell over into the stream. His horse, rearing with fright, plunged with his master.

Thornton looked down the precipice ; nothing was to be seen or heard but the whirl and rush of the dark tide.—“And can we go so quickly

from life to death: Why then should a man live in misery?"

He turned slowly away. The intense longing his savage was satisfied, and he was now left feeble as a child. He mounted his horse with difficulty, and journeyed homeward under a hot sun, his brain stunned with horror. At last his mind became slowly more distinct, and with the recollection of what had past, came frightful figures, which fell away, then suddenly rose again, and spread themselves close before him. He pressed his eyeballs till they darted fire, then passed his hand quickly before his face, as if to drive away what he saw, but the terrible sight returned upon him.

The next day he reached the city about dark. As he entered it, the sudden change from the quiet of the country to the noise, the quick and various movements of the crowd, the broken light and shadow, and flare of lamps, increased the confusion of his mind, till it so wandered, that he scarcely knew where he was when he reached his own door.

He leaned forward on his horse for some time, trying to regain his self-possession. At last, looking up at the house, and observing it quite

still and dark, the thought of his wife crossed him, for the first time. He leaped from his horse, and rushing up the steps, rang violently at the door. It was opened cautiously by one he had never seen before; but such was the confused state of his mind that he paid no regard to the circumstance. Throwing open the door of the sitting room, he found it stript of all its furniture. He hurried from room to room; all was bare and deserted. Then came the dreadful truth upon him that he was beggared. The shock nearly unsettled his brain.

He ran towards the street door, scarcely knowing whither he was going, when he was arrested by a couple of men, for debt. He made no resistance, but talking incoherently to himself, suffered them to carry him peaceably to prison. He laid down upon the bed furnished him, and soon fell asleep as quietly as if in his own house, for both body and mind had lost their sensibility through violent effort and fatigue.

The sun had shot into his prison with a red and dusty ray, before he awoke; and for a long time he could not recollect where he was, or what had past.—“In prison, and for murder, and die on a gallows!”—The turning of the key roused

him a little.—“My brain’s disordered.”—A man handed him a letter, and left the room. He gazed on it some time without minding whose hand it was.—“My God, my mother!” cried he, at last; “and am I to be your murderer too!”

Mrs. Thornton had heard from old Mr. Beckford of the attachment laid upon her son’s property immediately after his leaving the city, and had written in a state of mind that showed she could not much longer endure her sufferings. Mr. Beckford, at her earnest request, had gone to her. His nephew had left town unexpectedly; but the only suspicion was that he had fled with Mrs. Thornton, and that her husband had now returned, after an unsuccessful search. Thornton’s anguish was dreadful. His mother dangerously ill, and made so by him, and yet he not allowed to see her.—“She will die,” said he to himself, “believing that I cared not for her; and yet I dare not let her know why I cannot see her.”

In a day or two came another letter, and from Mr. Beckford, for the mother was too feeble to write. Thornton’s impatience was now almost maddening. At times he raved like a maniac, then suddenly sunk down into a state of torpor,

till the remembrance of his father, his leaving home, the misery he had brought upon himself and his friends, rushed on him. Then would suddenly appear the face of Isaac, as he saw him die, and he would spring up, and stand, as if stiff and frozen with horror.

This was not to endure long. Mr. Beckford wrote a letter to him, stating that his release was procured, and urging him to set off immediately by the conveyance furnished ; for that his mother, unfortunately, had heard of his imprisonment, and that the shock had been a violent one to her, in her weak condition.

Thornton was standing in a state of apparent insensibility, when the keeper entered with the letter. He did not notice that any one was in the room ; but when his eye fell upon it, as it was handed to him, he seized it as a caged lion would his food. He ran his fiery eyes over it, then shook it from his hand as if it had been a snake he held.—“This is not her blood,” muttered he, looking closely at one hand, then at another, as if counting the spots. “No, no, this is Isaac’s, I know it well—my old school-fellow, Isaac’s blood.” He stood a few minutes perfectly still, then pressed his hand to his forehead,

as if trying to recollect himself.—“Where have I been?—Ha! I remember now.”

“My horse, my horse,—is he ready?” he said eagerly, to the servant, who was entering the apartment.

“At the gate, Sir. But you are not ready.”

“True, true!” And he suffered the man to equip him. He looked at himself for a moment, as if not knowing for what purpose he was so dressed. Then, as the thought struck him, he darted out of the prison, and running to the gate, threw himself upon the horse, and dashing the rowels into his sides, was out of sight in a moment.

There was now but one purpose in his mind, and he clung to it with a spasmodic grasp. And the speed with which he rode, and his intense eagerness, nearly fired his brain. His eye was fixed on home—he saw nothing round him—he minded not hill, nor hollow.

The horse’s nostrils closed and dilated fast, and the sweat ran down his hoofs, when Thornton came in sight of the house. Once more he urged him on;—and then he reached the door. He tossed the reins on the neck of the panting beast, and throwing himself off, was in an instant at the

head of the stairs. The chamber door was shut. As he flung it open, he rushed towards the foot of the bed. On it lay, with a white sheet over it and with bandaged jaws, the corpse of his mother. His hands spread, his eyes glared wide, and his very hair stood on end. One shudder passed through his frame as if it would have snapt short every stretched fibre. Tearing with a grasp the hair from his head, he gave a shriek, enough to have awakened the dead, and ran, mad, from the chamber.

Old Mr. Beckford, hearing a noise over-head, stepped to the parlour door, and saw Thornton coming down stairs. He called out. Thornton said not a word, but rushed by him, the hair sticking to his clinched fingers. As he passed, he turned his eyes on the old man—the sockets sent out nothing but flame. The old gentleman followed, trembling, to the door, and looked out, but he was gone. The noise came and went like a thunderclap, and all was still again.

He pushed eagerly on, not regarding whither he was going; and the horse took the same course Thornton did the first time he left home.

At last Thornton struck upon the heath, and rode onward till he came where the way forked.

His recollection returned in a moment. He checked his horse suddenly, and looked over the track he had once passed. His lip quivered, and tears stood in his eyes. "Ages of misery have rolled over me since then," said he, looking forward upon the track till it was lost in the distance.—"To the left, to the left," cried he to his horse, and pressing him on, "for that, I then said, was ill omen, and it suits me now."

After Mr. Beckford had laid the unhappy mother in her grave, and had sent in all directions to gain some information concerning her son, he went to the city to make inquiries about his nephew.

The horse was washed up near the precipice, but Isaac's body was never found. It was supposed that the animal had taken fright, and had fallen with his rider into the stream.

Mrs. Thornton was soon heard of as appearing the dashing mistress of a young man in a distant city. Her extravagance and violent temper caused frequent changes in this sort of connexion, and she soon sank down into the lowest class of females of her order, and died as they die.

As no account of Thornton could be gained, it was conjectured either that he had destroyed



himself, or had wandered away a maniac. It was autumn when he disappeared; the winter had set in stormy and cold, and some supposed he might have perished.

In the early part of the day, towards the close of spring, as the widow Wentworth was taking care of a brood of chickens just hatched, a man, in a fisher's garb, drove up to her door. He was seated in a light horse-cart, old and shattered, and drawn by a small, lean horse. He inquired whether she could inform him where lived a woman of the name of Wentworth.

"It's for me you are looking, I suppose, good man. What's your will?"

"I would ask you to give me a morsel," said he, getting down from his cart, "before I tell my errand; for I've rode ever since day break, and it has been but a chilly morning."

After finishing his meal, he began as follows.—

"There was a strange young man made his appearance in our parts last autumn; and he has been thereabouts up to this time. It's clear that he's not altogether right here," said the man, pointing to his head; "but then he would harm nobody, and kept wandering about all alone; and so we never troubled him."

"Well, what of him?" said the old woman eagerly ;—for she immediately conjectured who it might be.

"I fear he's dying," said the man. "He was not seen all along shore for many days ; and some of us went to his hut ; and there he was lying, looking like one of the dead. But he was sensible enough then, and begged that we would find a widow of the name of Wentworth, (who I thought from his account must live hercabouts,) and bring her to him before he died , 'for,' said he, 'she is the only one of all the living that has any love for me.'"

"And did he tell his name?"

"No," said the man. "We asked him, but he said it was no matter, and that you would remember him to whom you told your story, and talked so holily when the sun was going down. 'She'll not have forgotten it,' said he, (so mournfully that I could have cried,) 'as I did, when I most needed it.' "

"And think you he's living?" said the old woman.—"It matters not," she said to herself. "I saw the tear glisten in his eye, when I told him of Sally, and I talked with him by her grave ; and I'll lay him in the ground too, when he dies.—"

"Which way, and how far is it to the place, good man?"

"A dozen miles, or so, due east, as I guess."

"How am I to get there, and back?" asked she.

"Even with me," he answered, "for this is the only coach in all our neck of land, and this the only steed, ragged as he looks, except the poor young man's, and he's in no better condition now."

The old woman having found a friend to take charge of her house, began her journey.

"We were all out a fishing, except the old woman," said the man, as they rode along. When we got back, she told us that a young man, a gentleman, and well dressed, had been to the hut two or three times for food, and that he always took it away with him. She would not receive his money, for he appeared not to be in his right mind. But he never failed leaving some on the table. Whether or not he knew of our return, I can't say; but we saw nothing of him, till one day, passing the old hut which we had left for a better, we spied him sitting at the door, and his horse feeding on the coarse grass near it. As soon as he discovered us, he went in, and he ever shunned us. We've seen him looking for

shellfish among the rocks, and carrying home wreck-wood for firing. How he kept himself warm through winter, I cannot tell. But for aught we could find, dried seaweed must have been his bedding. We have sometimes left food in his hut when he was out; and his horse used now and then to share the scant fare of this pony here; for I could not but pity him, though a beast, when the sleet drove sharp against him."

A heavy sea-fog was now coming in. In a few minutes the sun was hid, and the damp stood on the nag's long, shaggy coat like rain-drops. They soon heard the low growl of the sea; and turning a high point of land, they saw near them multitudes of breakers, foaming and roaring, and flinging themselves ashore, like sea-monsters chasing their prey.

They were descending slowly through heavy sand to the beach, when they heard two persons calling to each other in a sharp, high key. The voices sounded as at a great distance; but in a moment, they saw just ahead of them, and coming towards them, out of the spray and mist, a man, in a sailor's jacket, and a woman in one of the same, with a man's hat fastened under her chin by a red handkerchief. A startling, myste-

rious feeling passed over the old woman, as if those she saw were something more than human, and were given another nature to be dwellers in the sea.

"Is there life in him?" cried her guide, as they passed.—"Scant alive," called out the woman. The old widow looked back. They were passing into the mist, and were instantly lost sight of.

The fog began to break away, and the sea and sand flashed upon them with a blinding brightness. They dragged on a mile or two further, when the sky became gloomy, and the wind began to rise.

"And is all as desolate as this?" asked the old woman, looking over a thousand shapeless sand hills, which stretched away one behind another, without end, and seeming as if heaved up and washed by the sea, then left bare to sight.

"There is little that's better," answered the man.

"And have you no other growth than this yellow, reedy grass, that spears up so scantily out of these sand-hills?"

"It's not so ill a sight to us, neither, who have nothing greener," answered the man, a

little hurt. "And there's a bright red berry that looks gay enough amongst it.—But peace," said he, "for here's the dwelling of the dying man."

The building was of rough boards, some of which hung loose and creaking in the wind. It was turned almost black, except on the side towards the sea, which shone with a grayish crust; and a corner of the decayed chimney was seen just above the roof. On the ridge of one of the sand-hills by the house, stood, with his drooping head from them, the starved, sharp-boned horse, the sand whirling round him like drifting snow.—"Poor fellow," said the man, "when I first saw him, he was full of metal, and snuffed the air and looked with pricked ears and wild eye out upon the sea, as if he would bound over it."

The old woman opened the door cautiously. A gray-headed man was sitting by a sort of crib of rough boards, in which lay Thomas Thornton, his eyes closed, his cheek hollow and pale, and his mouth relaxed and open.

"Is this he," said she, talking to herself as she looked upon him, "with the burning eye and hot cheek and firm set mouth, of fiery and untamed passions? I did not look to see you come to

such an end, much as I feared for you.—May your sufferings here be an atonement for your sins.—All was not evil in you. Many have died happier than you, who had less of good in them ; and have left a better name behind them than you will leave.”—A tear dropped from her eyes on his forehead. He opened his sleepily upon her. The colour came to his cheek ; he lifted his hand to hers with a weak motion, and looked towards the old man.—“ Leave us alone a little while,” said the widow.

He spoke. “ I have been a sinful man,” he said in a faint, broken voice. He paused, and his look became wild.—“ My father,—and Isaac, Isaac—he fell—and my mother—did I kill them all ?” His eye appeared to fasten on an object in the distance. He then closed his lids hard, as if trying to shut out something frightful.

“ What looked you at ?” asked the widow.

“ O, you could not see her. She is seen of none but me. I’ve looked upon the sight a thousand times. I’ve seen her shrouded body rising and falling with the waves, stretched out, as it was on her death-bed ; and it bent not, and it floated nearer and nearer to me till I could look no longer.—And there, too, has she stood

for hours, on that small, white rock yonder that rises out of the sea," said he, trying eagerly to raise himself, and look out towards it. "Yes, there has she stood beckoning me, when the sun beat upon it; and I was made to look on it till its glare turned all around me black. I've tried to rush into the sea to her, though the waves ran so heavy between us; but I was held back till the sweat streamed down my body, and I fell on the sand."—He gasped for breath, and lay panting. At last he recovered a little; and opening his eyes, looked slowly about him. His lips moved. The old woman bent over him, and heard him breathe out, "God forgive my sins."

"God will forgive the repentant, however wicked they have been," said the widow. He gave a look of hope.—"I've asked it of Him day and night, when I had my mind; I've prayed to Him, stretched on the bare, cold rocks, and when I dared not look up. Will not you pray for me? Will none of the good pray for me?"

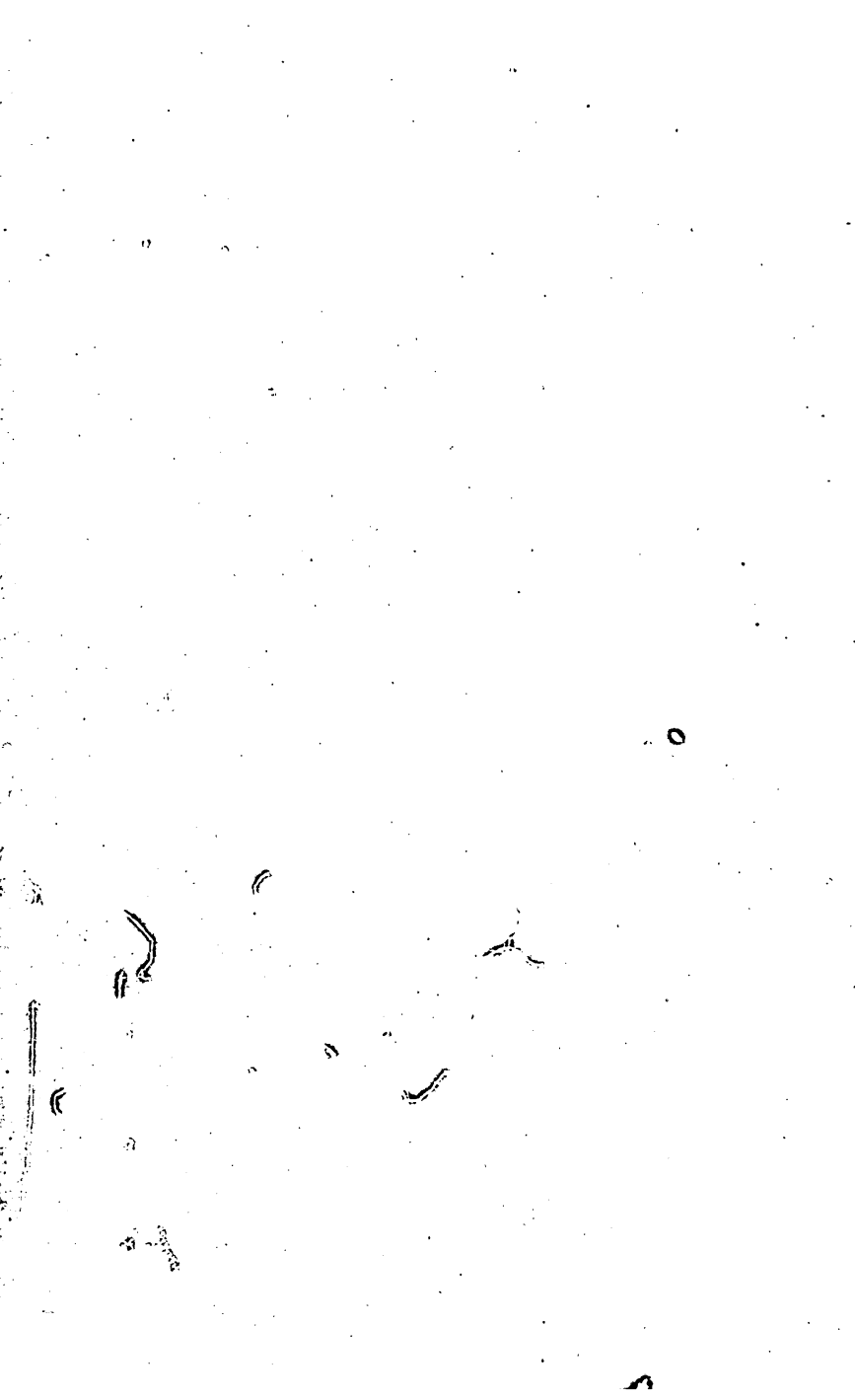
She knelt down by him, with her hands clasped, and looking upward. There was an agony of soul for a moment—she could not



**speak.** The tears rolled down her wrinkled cheeks, and then she prayed aloud. And from the shore went up a prayer fervent and holy as ever ascended from the house of God. And the dying man prayed with her in the spirit. She ended, and laying her hand on his forehead, said in a solemn voice, "my son, I trust there is mercy for you with God."

He looked upward and tried to clasp his hands. It was his last effort, and he sank away with a countenance as placid, as if falling into a gentle sleep.

The old widow stood for a few minutes gazing on the lifeless body. At last she said to herself, without turning away,—“he must not lie here, as an out-cast; for the sands will drive over him, and there will be no mark where he rests. I will take him with me, and lay him by the stream near my home. And when I die, I shall be gathered with him and with my child to the grave.”













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